



—Drawing by Michelle Weaver

The Baptist Record

Thursday, January 10, 1991

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Pastor's Christmas wish comes true

By Anne W. McWilliams

"All I want for Christmas . . . is a hand — and a foot." If that was Manuel Ponce's Christmas wish for 1990, as it well may have been, then it came true. Thanks to some Mississippians, plus a few others.

Manuel, the pastor of First Baptist Church, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, lost his left hand and his right foot 12 years ago as the result of an electric shock, an accident on his job as electrician.

On Dec. 14, 1990, he was fitted with an artificial foot, soon after he'd received a "hand," a hook to help him hold or handle objects.

Frazier Ward, orthopedic surgeon who is a member of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, gave his services. Paul Ballard of Jackson, former missionary to Colombia, whose specialty is fitting prostheses, also gave his services. David Lema, Cuban-born pastor of the Emmanuel Spanish Baptist Mission of Williams Boulevard Church, Kenner, La., acted as host and translator, as well as transportation provider — to airport, doctors' offices, and hospital.

Last spring Bill Dollahite of Isola led a medical/dental mission trip to Calaire, Honduras. At that time, the team of dentists, doctors, and pharmacists, most from Mississippi, initiated the pastor's treatment in the United States. Dollahite coordinated

the project. Various individuals and churches have helped to pay the hospital costs of \$5,000 or \$6,000. Others who wish to have a part in paying the remaining \$2,100 may send contributions to Hollandale Baptist Church, Hollandale, MS for the Manuel Ponce Fund.

At the time of Manuel's accident, only the front section of his foot was amputated, leaving a portion of the heel. Constant walking on that curved it out of shape. Though some doctors had given the opinion that the rest of the foot needed to be amputated at ankle level, Dr. Ward told Manuel, on first evaluation, that he could reconstruct the heel. This he did in Sept. 10 surgery at University Hospital, Jackson. The December trip to Mississippi was Manuel's fourth in 1990.

Actually, the accident a dozen years ago was a pivotal point in Manuel's life. He had been born into a Baptist home in Tegucigalpa and as a boy had become a Christian and been baptiz-

ed. During his teens, though, he had become rebellious and stopped going to church. He married a girl named Cruz. "Then I had two women fussing at me!" he recalls — "my mother and my wife." So he ran away from them to Guatemala, and found a job as an electrician. His third day on the new job, he got the shock that sent him to the hospital, apparently unconscious. But he heard a doctor say he probably would die; he prayed, "Lord, if you will let me live, I'll live my life entirely for you."

Minus a hand and a foot, he returned home, and surrendered to preach. While he studied at the Baptist Seminary in Tegucigalpa, he planted three churches, often walking two miles to church, on his stump of a heel. His pastorate at First Baptist, Tegucigalpa, is his second at that church.

On Dec. 14, a week before Christmas, he sat in the lobby of the Pavilion at University Hospital, humming, "The wonder of it all — that

Jesus loves me!" Dr. Ward does not ordinarily see patients in his office except on Wednesdays, and this was a Friday. Yet he had agreed to see Manuel. That morning the Honduran had obtained a prosthesis, at the office of Dr. Ballard. He could walk around in the lobby with only a very slight limp. When offered a Coca Cola, he reached for it with his new "hand."

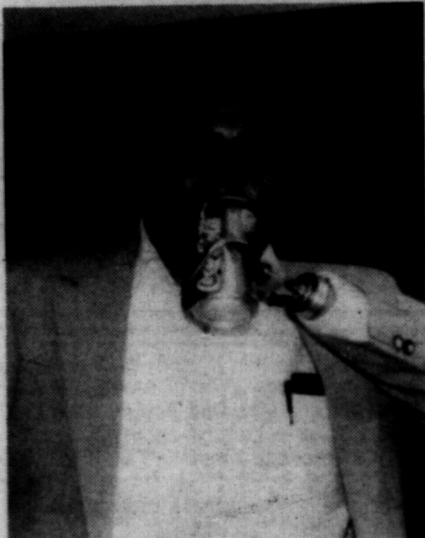
Later, in the office, Dr. Ward examined Manuel's leg and gave him instructions on proper use of the

prosthesis. As the pastor sat encircled by friends who had shown their love and concern, tears suddenly sprang to his eyes and a broad smile stretched his face. He reached for the doctor and gave him a warm Latin American hug.

God's promise, in Manuel's favorite verse, Joshua 1:9, had not failed him: "... Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."



A teary smile lights the face of Manuel Ponce as he reaches out to give orthopedic surgeon, Frazier Ward, a bear hug, after receiving a new right "foot."



Manuel Ponce holds a Coca Cola with his new "hand."



Manuel Ponce models his new right foot. Seated with him are, left to right, David Lema of Kenner, La., his host and translator; R. J. Reynolds, Newton dentist; Murray Estess, pharmacist, son of Dottie Estess of Hollandale, who is seated beside him. Mrs. Estess and her husband, John, a doctor, were on the mission team that went to Honduras last spring. So was Reynolds. They were among those who helped Ponce come to Mississippi for medical aid.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson



Which translation?

The radio preacher said it. I missed it the first time, so he repeated it for the slower listener. "Only the King James Version of the Bible is really inspired." Later in a Bible school advertisement I noticed, "Only the KJV used in classes."

Now, I love the King James Bible. The memorized verses I know are all from the KJV and I prefer using it when preaching. However, in studying or reading, three or four versions may be used.

In 1604, King James I of England authorized gifted men to translate the Word. H. L. Mencken said, "It is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible; indeed, it is probably the most beautiful piece of writing in all the literature of the world."

In 1611, the translation committee submitted their version. Immediately, opposition arose. Puritan Hugh Broughton declared "that I had rather

be rent to pieces with wild horses than any such translation by my consent should be urged upon poor churches." Many preachers continued to use the Latin, Greek, or some other translation long after 1611. The independent churches cut themselves off from the English Church and the English Scriptures, preferring the Geneva Bible.

The common people gladly received the new Bible, and its influence began to be felt in the churches.

Languages are living, and words become obsolete. Others actually change their meanings over a period of time. For 200 years the KJV dominated the Protestant churches in the English-speaking world, and even today we switch to "thee" and "thou" on Sunday.

In 1885, the Revised Standard Version was published to be followed in the next 100 years by at least 18 others. Each new translation had strengths

and weaknesses.

The Bible speaks today in over 1,200 languages. It has been translated more often and into more languages than any other book. More will be forthcoming. No version will ever be considered as the final translation.

Which is the best translation? I'm not sure there is an answer to that question. Some will continue to prefer the KJV. The New International Version (1973) is considered a benchmark in translations. J. B. Phillips and the Living Bible are paraphrases and are excellent for home reading.

The Bible that speaks to your heart, one noted for accuracy and clarity, will be the best for you. John Rainolds, who helped translate the King James Version, said, "God forbid that you should think that divinity consists of words, as a wood doth of trees... True divinity cannot be learned unless we frame our hearts and minds wholly to it."

Guest opinion . . .

The crisis in Baptist education

By Ronald E. Bishop

Several years ago, a friend of mine, a pastor in another denomination, remarked to me, "You Baptists have it made. We have to finish college in order to be ordained. You don't have to go to school at all."

He claimed to know people in his denomination who had become Baptists in order to "get by easily."

His continued generalization of Baptists as lazy and poorly-motivated annoyed me. Yet I realized that his attitude was common among those who are required to demonstrate academic discipline.

My next confrontation concerning Christian education occurred when I was a senior religion major at William Carey College. Sensing God's direction into a ministry vocation, I did not choose to get by easily. Rather, I saw the need for proficiency in not only general studies but intensive study in the field of religion and Bible.

I was accosted one day by a man in the department store where I worked part-time. He was a Baptist, but of another sort. He thought that education was the work of the devil. I shall never forget his words, "If God has called you to preach, then quit wasting your time going to school. Get out there and preach!"

I thought it was sad that someone living in the 20th Century could have such an opinion.

Even before graduating from college, I had determined to seek the best education possible. I chose a Southern Baptist seminary for several reasons. One was the testimony of my pastor,

who had spent three years pursuing a master's degree in New Orleans. His evaluation of his time spent and the education he received convinced me of the soundness of our graduate programs.

There were times when I became frustrated in my studies. One was the time when a friend announced that she had earned her M.A. in another field in only one year. Another was when I read that one of my college classmates was now "Doctor So and So," having chosen a quicker and easier route.

But I knew all the time that everyone would know the difference between his or her education and mine after I finished. Most importantly, I would know the difference. After spending nine years at a fully-accredited Southern Baptist seminary, I know the difference.

Recent developments in Baptist education have continued to dismay many who are concerned with quality education. One of our seminaries has come dangerously close to losing accreditation due to the academic disregard of the trustees and administration. Many Baptist scholars have left our institutions. The prospect of replacing them with people committed to open inquiry looks bleak.

Some among us are even advocating "self-accreditation." Their suggestion is, "Let's ignore the importance of our reputation within the larger academic circle. Forget being accredited by independent ac-

crediting associations. Let's set our own rules."

My friend may have been right. Maybe we are largely lazy and poorly-motivated. Maybe we want the easy way out. It seems that there are many of us who want to set all the rules. That way we will always win. Or, as one of the pamphlets I receive frequently from mail-order Bible schools says, "You can not receive a failing grade at our school."

Quality education takes time, and it takes money. If there is not the chance of failing a course, what is the value of passing?

To think that a doctor of theology degree can be bought with \$400 and a year spent with the mailbox is ludicrous. To think that one can do serious study for service to God "in your spare time" reveals questionable priorities.

Perhaps we all are to blame for this poor conception of education. Individuals are to blame when they lust after accomplishment, not wanting to pay the price. Churches share the responsibility in being unsympathetic to student ministers. Face it, it is more convenient to permit staff members to be absent while attending classes. Perhaps we all need to share the responsibility of knowing the difference between an A.Div., an M.Div., and M.R.E., a D.Min., and Ed.D., a Ph.D., and a Th.D. Or are we too lazy and poorly-motivated to care?

Ronald E. Bishop is pastor of Salem Church, Collins.

A Prayer for Saddam Hussein and George Bush

O God, you fill the universe with light and love.
In you we live and move and have our being.
We pray for Saddam Hussein and George Bush.
Enlighten their minds and fill their hearts
with the power of your creative love.
Guide their actions so that all civilians
and soldiers in the Persian Gulf area
are protected from the sufferings of war.
Inspire their
decisions
so that the crisis
in the Middle East
is resolved
peacefully, and
all people
of the world
learn to walk
in ways of justice,
love and peace.

AMEN

Colonial Heights sets "Operation Prayer Shield"

A special day of prayer, designated as "Operation Prayer Shield," for divine guidance in solving the Middle East Gulf crisis will be held at Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, on Friday, Jan. 11, four days prior to the Jan. 15 deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

The joint effort is being hosted by members of Colonial Heights, located on Old Canton Road, with the support of pastors and leaders from four other churches in the area. Pastors from each of the four churches will lead one-hour special prayer emphasis periods, beginning at 10 a.m. on the 11th.

The pastors and the hours they will lead are: 10 a.m. — Bobby Williamson, Park Place Church, Brandon; 11 a.m. — Jerry Young, New Hope Church, Jackson; 12 noon — John Case, Christ United Methodist Church, Jackson; and 1 p.m. — James Baird, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson.

The public is invited to attend any or all of the special hour-prayer sessions they desire, according to Bill Davidson, associate pastor of Colonial Heights. He said the church will open its doors for those wishing to come by for prayer during the entire day, beginning at 6 a.m. to benefit those going to work, and until 8 p.m. for those wishing to come by after work.

Cooperative Program gifts up in 1990

Mississippi churches gave \$20,085,836 through the Cooperative Program in 1990 for worldwide ministries, announced Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer, MBCB. This is 2.5 percent over the anticipated budget and meets the challenge section of the budget.

"It also is a \$1,179,498 or 6.2 percent increase over the previous year," said Causey. "The annual budget of \$19,581,130 was surpassed by \$504,706. This challenge section of \$500,000 will be divided, 50 percent to Christian education, 25 percent to SBC causes and 25 percent to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board causes."



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Disaster unit ministers after storm in Vaiden

By Tim Nicholas

The courthouse clock in Vaiden, Miss., stopped at 5:04 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 21, when a tornado destroyed large sections of the community. But when the clock stopped, Baptists went to work ministering to victims.

Vaiden Baptist Church Pastor R. Leon Holly huddled with his family in the parlor by the church as the tornado blew through the north Mississippi town.

Just after the tornado ripped through the town, a church member phoned Holly to say a fellow member had lost his home. "We went across town and found them (the family) wandering in the rain," said Holly, who took the family's children and began checking other areas of town.

Though the rain was still coming in torrents, "I began to walk," said Holly, who scrambled down the litter-choked roads, checking up on other church families in the path of the twister.

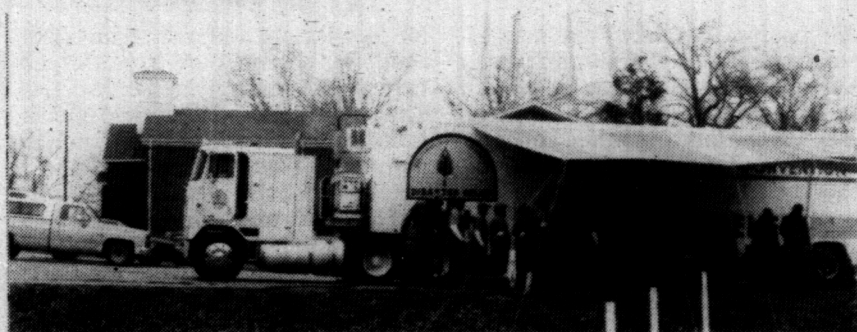
He went to the mobile home of church Sunday School director Larry Ingram, whose home had blown about 100 feet from its foundation and wrapped itself around a pine tree. Fellow member Mark Havens had arrived a short while ahead of Holly. "We had walked around the scene for several minutes before we heard a little girl cry," said Havens.

Ingram had taken his 4-year-old daughter Rachel to the bathroom, covered her with his body and held on to the toilet.

They both survived. Havens pulled Rachel out of the wreckage and accompanied her to the hospital. She was recovering, as is her father whose back had been punctured by a steel door frame, the skin on his back flayed away by the wind.



R. Leon Holly, pastor of Vaiden Baptist Church, has a hot meal to take some of the chill out of the days following New Year's when his work was still seeing no slowing down.



The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit was called into action from its home base in nearby Kosciusko to Vaiden to serve prisoners who were aiding in cleanup efforts following a tornado there.



Marshall Jeffries of First Church, Brandon, a disaster relief volunteer, serves Parchman inmates who were assisting in the Vaiden cleanup. These inmates are first-time offenders, serving short terms, in para-military training with the idea that Parchman "is not a place to come back to," said a supervisor.

Another church family, the Paces, suffered the death of a daughter, 12-year-old Kristie, as a result of the tornado. Their other two daughters, though injured, were recovering.

Holly and his wife Geneva stayed at the Lexington Hospital with the Pace family to about four the next morning.

Meanwhile, Jim Didlake of the Convention Board's Brotherhood staff had been monitoring the weather's activities. Didlake, on-site coordinator for Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief, left at four-thirty that morning for Vaiden with Ed Bailey, a disaster crew volunteer from Brandon. Together with the chief of police, they made a windshield survey of the damage.

Then Didlake picked up Holly, who had had about two hours' sleep, and they met with the county clerk, the board of supervisors, and Red Cross staff. As a result of that meeting, the Baptists were asked to handle food services during the disaster response. The Salvation Army would handle clothing distribution.

The kitchen at the church was too small, but since school was out, Vaiden High's kitchen was pressed in to service with permission of the principal and superintendent of education. Feeding began Sunday morning,

Dec. 23 and continued through Thursday, Dec. 27. That effort provided about 1,600-1,800 hot meals. The disaster relief unit arrived Jan. 2 to feed Parchman prisoners brought in to handle cleanup and was to stay through the middle of this week. The unit was feeding about 250 persons a day.

Meanwhile, the Vaiden church organized itself for response. Five families had everything destroyed, so Holly called together five unaffected couples to serve as a disaster committee. Their immediate work was to purchase Christmas gifts for the five families, particularly the children. Paul Harrell, state Brotherhood director, told Holly the immediately available \$1,000 of disaster relief money could, indeed, be spent on such gifts.

However, by the next evening, churches and individuals had begun contacting the Vaiden church, sending money for relief. And the disaster committee's responsibilities increased.

As of last week, more than \$28,000 was in hand at the church, so the committee now has the job of "making judgment on how to disburse the money," said Holly, who noted that the

(See **VAIDEN** on page 4)

Chapman requests recommendations for key SBC appointments

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention President Morris Chapman issued an open letter, released Dec. 12, seeking recommendations of people to be appointed to key SBC committees.

"I am initiating the process which will lead to choosing individuals to serve our convention as members of the 1991 Committee on Committees, Resolutions Committee, Credentials Committee, and Tellers Committee," wrote Chapman, pastor of First Church in Wichita Falls, Texas.

The convention president appoints the four key committees that will serve June 4-6, 1991, at the annual meeting in Atlanta.

The Committee on Committees, composed of two members from each qualified state, nominates the Committee on Nominations and other committees not otherwise provided for.

The Resolutions Committee, made up of 10 members, consisting of three members of the Executive Committee, handles all resolutions presented during the annual meeting.

The Credentials Committee, which included 28 members last year, oversees registration.

The Tellers Committee, consisting of 15 members last year, tabulates all votes taken at the annual meeting.

Chapman noted qualities he is looking for in making his appointments: "I hope to appoint persons whose spirit reflects a deep love for and a fresh walk with our dear Lord Jesus Christ."

"Persons serving on these committees should have a genuine burden for lost souls. I know that every Southern Baptist recognizes the importance of recommending persons who have qualities and abilities which are uniquely suited for serving on an SBC committee."

Chapman explained, "Only the names and information submitted on a completed recommendation form will be fully considered."

The information should include:

— The full name of the nominee; complete mailing address; home and business telephone numbers, including area code;

— The committee to which the nominee is being recommended; any previous service on any SBC committee and/or board;

— Whether the nominee is employed by a church or any denominational entity or is a layperson, including the correct title or occupation and complete business mailing address;

— The nominee's church affiliation, including the church mailing address and telephone number; total church membership and the amount and percentage given through the Cooperative Program unified budget during 1989-90;

— The number of baptisms during 1989-90 in the nominee's church, and whether the nominee plans to attend the 1991 annual meeting.

Chapman identified again other personal qualifications. The nominees appointed must:

1. Be a cooperating Southern Baptist;

2. Have a commitment to perpetuating an allegiance to God's perfect Word through the institutional life of Southern Baptists; and

3. Be in agreement with the Peace Committee's statement on Scripture.

"While I will stay within these cooperative and theological guidelines in my appointments, I will, as I pledged, reach beyond perceived political parameters," Chapman stated.

Recommendation forms may be obtained by writing Martha Gaddis, The Executive Committee, 901 Commerce Street, Nashville, TN, 37203.

Chapman asked people wishing to make recommendations to send the completed recommendation form to him personally at First Baptist Church, 1200 Ninth Street, Wichita Falls, TX, 76301. The envelope should be marked "SBC Committee Recommendations."

Christian pastor executed amid new repression in Iran

LONDON (BP) — A Christian pastor has been executed in Iran amid a new wave of repression against Christian believers and churches in the country.

Sources inside Iran reported that Hossein Soodmand, 55, an ordained Assemblies of God minister, was hanged Dec. 3 after being tortured during two months of imprisonment.

Soodmand's body was not released for burial. Fellow pastors who visited a prison in Mashad, a city in northeastern Iran, were told of the hanging and were shown a coroner's report stating Soodmand was dead. Authorities escorted them to an isolated grave and told them it contained Soodmand's body. The pastors said the grave was not in a cemetery but in a location they deemed "not a respectable place" for burials.

Soodmand was one of a handful of Iranian pastors who have left Islam and accepted the Christian faith. He had been asked by church leaders to move from Mashad to Gorgan, a city northeast of Tehran, to lead a con-

gregation there. A church Soodmand led in Mashad was closed by the government in 1988.

The pastor had been conducting private meetings since the closing of the Mashad church, but sources said the government knew of the meetings.

When Soodmand arrived in Gorgan he was arrested by local authorities, blindfolded, and taken away for interrogation, sources said. He then was ordered to leave Gorgan and return to Mashad.

Upon arrival back in Mashad, he was arrested again and imprisoned. During the following four weeks, Soodmand reportedly was subjected to public mockery for his faith and ordered to pray aloud repeatedly. He also was tortured, sources said, but no details were available on the extent of the torture.

He was released on bail for a time, then rearrested and imprisoned for another month. His hanging was reported to have taken place Dec. 3,

(See **IRAN** on page 5)

Church starting may also include church restarting

Part 5 of 6

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP) — Is it easier to start a new church or revive an old one?

Few pastors or missionaries would disagree: starting a new church is easier than reviving an old one. But what's easiest may not always be best, some argue.

While Southern Baptists have emphasized church starting in recent years, many plateaued and declining churches feared their plight would be forgotten. Yet getting the majority of Southern Baptist churches growing is a priority of Bold Mission Thrust alongside the goal of starting new churches.

"Our convention seems to be so excited about the new babies that we're letting some of the old babies lay on the table and die," said Jim Summers, pastor of Northwest Church in Miami. "Some of them could be revived."

Unless the flow of plateaued and declining churches is abated, the next frontier for church starting will be in the graveyard of Southern Baptists' past victories, Summers said.

Southern Baptist Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis agreed: "If a church declines or dies, then we have to go in and plant other churches to take up the slack. So we would much rather see our existing churches become vital and viable rather than have to expend resources and time to start another work."

Lewis and other missions leaders are particularly troubled by the number of plateaued and declining churches in America's inner cities and transitional communities. The problem is that the weakest churches are closest to the largest concentrations of unchurched people.

In suburban areas, where Southern Baptist churches grow more easily, people inside the church are usually similar to people outside the church. However, in transitional communities, growth is stymied because the few people remaining inside the church have little in common with the surrounding population.

Miami illustrates on a large scale the problems increasingly faced in urban centers across the nation. The city which was once predominantly populated by white Southerners is now a melting pot of racial tension where there is no majority ethnic group.

As Latin American Catholics have migrated in from the South and Jews have relocated from the Northern U.S., white Southern Baptists have fled the inner cities and the churches they once established there. The few older church members remaining in the changing neighborhoods resist drawing the newcomers into their fellowship.

In this cycle, the church becomes the last refuge from change, explained Doyle Wetherington, director of missions for Miami Baptist Association. "The church is the one familiar point of stability in a life that is wrecked by change and instability."

This creates an insider-outsider mentality that prevents growth, Wetherington said. For this reason, Miami Baptist Association has lost 27 churches in the past 26 years.

"It has to do with their inability to minister to the new population around them, their inability to comprehend the cultural expressions of a common faith in Christ."

In the days of the old Miami, Northwest Church was the largest Southern

Baptist church in Florida, averaging about 1,700 in attendance.

After a plateau and subsequent decline, there were 260 people seated in the sanctuary to hear Jim Summers' first sermon in 1979.

However, Summers perceived his role more as a church planter than as a pastor. "I am a church planter," he said. "I just happen to be planting a church in the same building where we used to have another church 20 years ago."

The church planter-pastor began with a decision to allow the church to reflect the make-up of the surrounding community. "This is a tremendous decision, one which I believe every church in our major cities will have to make within the next 10 years," Summers said.

"I decided, God help me, that I was going to let the church take on the complexion of the community and let nature take its course. And I knew there was going to be some blood-letting in the process."

"I decided we could not succeed if the church became a little island of exclusivism and segregation in the mix of a microcosm of cultures. I decided to let the blood flow."

After 11 years, "all those who felt like it was their church and didn't want outsiders coming in have basically moved on up to Georgia," Summers says only half in jest.

Northwest is now a multi-racial church averaging nearly 1,200 in Sunday attendance. But continued growth is a constant battle, he says. "We've probably lost a thousand people in the last 11 years, mostly due to white flight. We have to take in 150 people a year just to hold our own."

Summers and his church have embraced not only new people but new methods of reaching those people. For example, traditional door-to-door evangelism does not work, he says.

"We've had people mugged and robbed on visitation. The church down the street lost five cars from the parking lot one Sunday evening."

Northwest has not grown by transfers from other Southern Baptist churches either. "We've had approximately 20 Southern Baptists join my church during these years. This is not a Southern Baptist city."

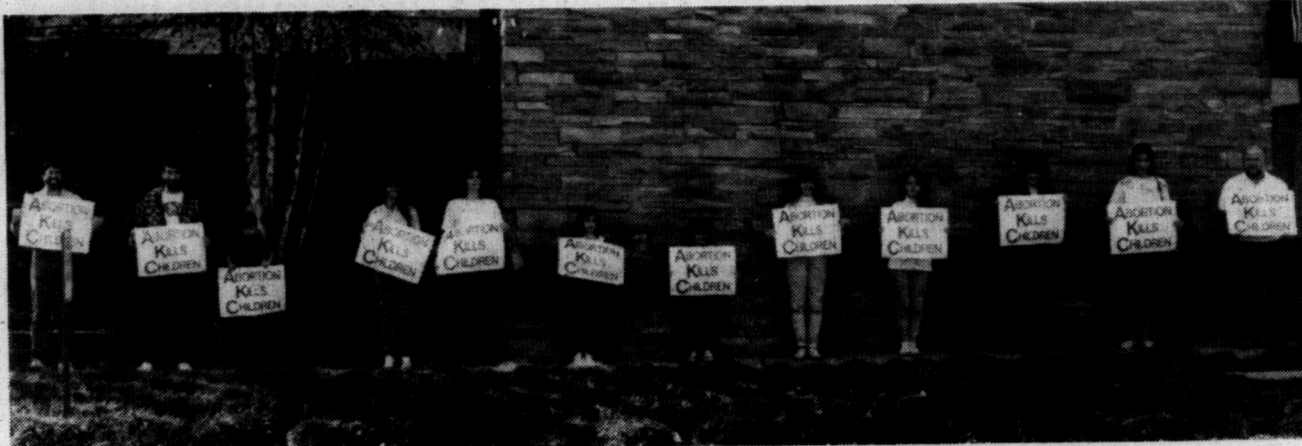
To grow a church in Miami, Summers challenges his people to take the Great Commission literally. "I challenge people to be visiting every day, in the workplace, in the marketplace. I preach that soul-winning is something you do every day."

Making these changes is usually easier after a community has experienced transition than during transition, says John Vaughan, a church growth professor at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo.

"When a community is changing and people are leaving, you're going to have not only plateau, you're going to have decline," he said. "Once the community has transitioned, you've got a new mission field. It may literally be a mission field rather than a church field as we have known it."

The lessons of Miami are important to all Southern Baptists because every community is in some kind of transition, Vaughan explained. "There needs to be a generation within our convention with a fresh vision for the changing community, who can go in and reclaim territory."

Wingfield writes for HMB.



A pro-life group forms a life chain in front of an abortion clinic.

Christian groups will gather Jan. 20 to form "Life Chain"

By Paul Jones

Mississippi Baptists have long affirmed the sanctity of human life. In a day when abortion has become a common means of birth control, many Christians and other concerned citizens are seeking a means to express their commitment to the sanctity of life and to affirm their desire in less confrontive ways to bring an end to abortion.

On Jan. 20, a group of concerned Christians across the country will gather to form a "Life Chain." "Life Chain" offers everyone who is interested an alternative means of expressing his opposition to abortion. The basic premise of "Life Chain" is simple but effective. All that is required is a small but determined group who will stand some six to eight feet apart along a predetermined route for an hour to an hour-and-a-half on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 20. Each participant will be asked to hold a sign bearing the solitary message, "Abortion Kills Children," for the passersby to see.

Such an activity is being planned

for Mississippi and will be an opportunity for all who care to participate to express their rejection of abortion. The public statement has two effects: It boosts the morale of the committed individual who participates, and it makes a concise declaration to the world that abortion, contrary to popular thinking, does not solve any problems. It affirms what the Christian community has long held — that the only thing abortion does is take the lives of innocent children.

The statement can be made by standing silently in line, or for those who need to sit, sitting in a lawn chair for an hour without breaking any laws and clearly stating one's opposition to abortion. At a time of year when we tend to reflect on many of God's blessings that have been bestowed upon us as individuals and as a nation, perhaps it is time that we express our concern to all of mankind regarding the sanctity of human life.

Jan. 20, 1991 is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday on the calendar of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is an

ideal opportunity for individuals who wish to participate to come together as the family of God to stand up and speak out in this very effective and visible manner.

"Life Chain" was organized in Yuba City, Calif., in 1987. It was begun by Please Let Me Live, a non-profit organization, and the event was first held in Yuba and Sutter counties in California where over 2,500 Christians participated by holding signs along the major traffic corridor. The "Life Chain" experience can help unite churches, the local press, law enforcement, public officials, and Christians of a community against abortion.

Individuals wishing to receive more information about "Life Chain" may contact Paul Jones, executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission, 968-3800, or Odie Mosher, statewide coordinator for "Life Chain," at 693-6592.

Jones is executive director-treasurer of Christian Action Commission, Mississippi Baptist Convention.

VAIDEN

From page 3

disbursement would be based on need going beyond church membership into the community.

"Local Baptist response has been tremendous," said Holly Grenada County Baptists sent two pickup truckloads of food, with a promise of more to come, said associational Brotherhood director James E. Ray. The Vaiden church had distributed more than 500 boxes of food to victims.

Holly and Didlake said finding food line help during the holidays was easy with volunteers always available. Holly said local pastors and their families participated. Frank Bishop of North Winona Church and his wife worked the line Christmas day; Johnny Walker of First, Winona, and his family, Christmas Eve night.

The Vaiden church has met with representatives of Vaiden Missionary Baptist Church, which was totally destroyed, organizing a joint response committee to work out ways to help.

Vaiden did not stand alone in disaster over the holidays. The second tornado death came in Belzoni. Columbus had flooding; Tupelo suffered from a gas outage. First Church, Saltillo, opened the building for shelter and food service on Christmas Eve, but only 10 people arrived there and in a Tupelo shelter. People instead moved in with friends and neighbors.

Linda Hambrick, a clerk at a Vaiden gas station and a member of Vaiden Baptist Church, lost her home in the tornado but remained optimistic.

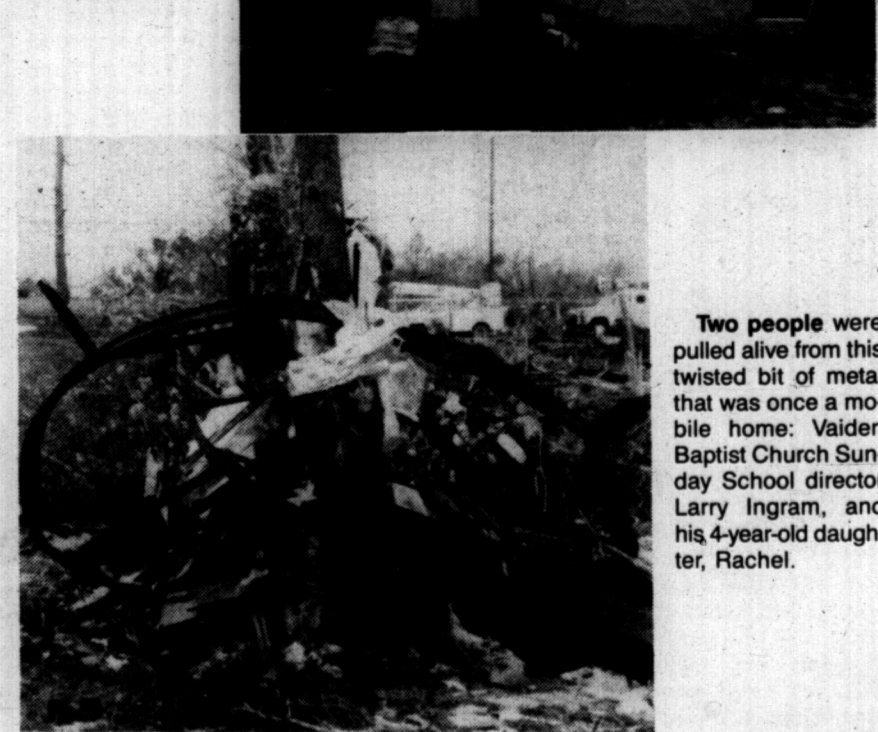
She said that ordinarily "all you

hear about is the bad" in people. However, "I found so much more good here — people caring about God and coming through — the different denominations working together." She

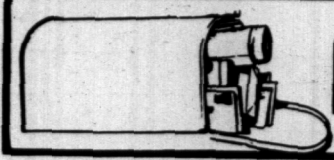
said she hadn't heard about the Baptist disaster work before, adding, "There's still a lot of good going on."

Nicholas is director, office of Communication, MBCB.

These steps led to a Methodist church near Vaiden, blown away by the Dec. 21 tornado.



Two people were pulled alive from this twisted bit of metal that was once a mobile home: Vaiden Baptist Church Sunday School director Larry Ingram, and his 4-year-old daughter, Rachel.



Letters to the editor

Pastor needed in Bangkok

Dear Editor:

Calvary International Baptist Church in Bangkok, Thailand is prayerfully seeking a new pastor. He is needed in June 1991 (or as soon thereafter as possible) and will be asked to make a commitment to a four-year ministry. If he meets the requirements of the Foreign Mission Board, he and his wife will be appointed associate foreign missionaries.

Calvary is an English-speaking congregation located in the heart of one of the largest and fastest growing cities in the world. Our primary emphasis is to witness and minister to the English-speaking business, diplomatic, and military community in Bangkok. We are praying for a pastor who has strong pulpit skills, and who has had experience in "growing" a church.

If you are interested, or know someone you would like to recommend, please write Mr. Lloyd Atkinson, Personnel Selection Dept., Foreign Mission Board — P. O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230.

Jim Thrash, chairman
Pastor Search Committee

Pearl River involved in missions

Editor:

We are currently involved in multiple missions and churches all over our state, many of them for other races. The Pearl River Association is also deeply involved.

The current major effort in Pearl River County is through the New Galilee Church. The church was started as a mission about four years ago, under the leadership of the pastor, Leslie Blakely, and the associational missions director, Kenneth Rhodes. The church is meeting in one of the old portable chapels that

was designed to seat about 80 worshippers. Their attendance is near 100 each service. The membership is nearing 200, and gives every indication that this would quickly double if adequate space were available. The large majority of the membership consists of single mother black families, and dozens of teen-agers and children. The potential, in this area, is so great that it is almost like presenting the gospel in a third world country. Many people, with very limited income, prevail in this ministry area.

The church is now in a building program and they are devoting as much of their income as possible to it. They, underwritten by the association, have borrowed as much as they could, but it will only be enough to enclose the building that is in work. The association has set aside a substantial sum to be applied, and a few individuals are adding to this fund. Even though this much effort has been made, it seems that about \$50,000 will be needed to complete this building, that will provide badly needed space.

I am serving as the associational coordinator for this building project, and I have faith that our people will respond to this great need if they are made aware of it. God works miracles through the hearts of his people, and I believe it can happen in this situation. It doesn't matter if it comes through one individual with \$50,000 to give, or through 50,000 with one dollar to give.

If anyone feels led to help, through prayer, funds, or labor, we will thank God for each of them. The mailing address is Pearl River Baptist Association, P. O. Box 259, Carriere MS, 39426. Phone numbers are 798-5115 (mine) and 798-2372.

Donald R. Windham
chairman, trustees and
missions
development committee
Carriere

Alaska team sought

Editor:

I have been asked by Bill Duncan, executive director of the Alaska State Convention, to organize a team of 80 preachers and 80 music directors to go to Alaska and preach Witness-Giving-Life Revivals April 7-14, 1991. I would like to invite preachers and music directors to prayerfully consider going on this mission project. There is a great need for the gospel to be shared in Alaska and you can help meet that need. I would like to ask churches to help pay the way for their pastor and/or music director.

Each participant will have to pay his own way to Alaska and the churches will provide food and lodging after we get there. The cost of round trip tickets at the present time ranges from \$725 to \$825 depending on where you are assigned.

If you are interested in going you can call me at 628-6262 (office) or 628-5729 (home), or write me at Drawer S, Calhoun City, MS 38916. I need to have the team signed up by mid-January. Tickets will need to be purchased by mid-February.

Wayne Gullett
director of missions
Calhoun City

Pastor needed in Italy

Editor:

The Calvary Baptist Church, a congregation of 100 people located in Lago Patria, Italy, which is near Naples, is in need of a pastor. The congregation is mainly people connected with the American military. Our church is affiliated with the European Baptist Convention (English language) and is founded on the principles and doctrines of the Southern Baptist Convention. If God is leading you to pastor in a missions setting, please contact: Gary Elliott, AIRSOUTH Box 143, FPO NY 09524.

Gary Elliott,
chairman,
Pastor Search Committee

Next time you see a beer or wine commercial . . . remember these sobering facts:

By the age of 18, a child will have seen 100,000 beer commercials.

Two out of five children will have tried wine coolers before age 13.

Alcohol is the leading cause of death of those between the ages of 16 and 24.

The economic costs to society of alcoholism and alcohol abuse are estimated at nearly \$117 billion a year, including \$18 billion from premature deaths, \$66 billion in reduced work effort and \$13 billion for treatment.

Alcohol kills 100,000 each year, 25 times as many as all illegal drugs combined.

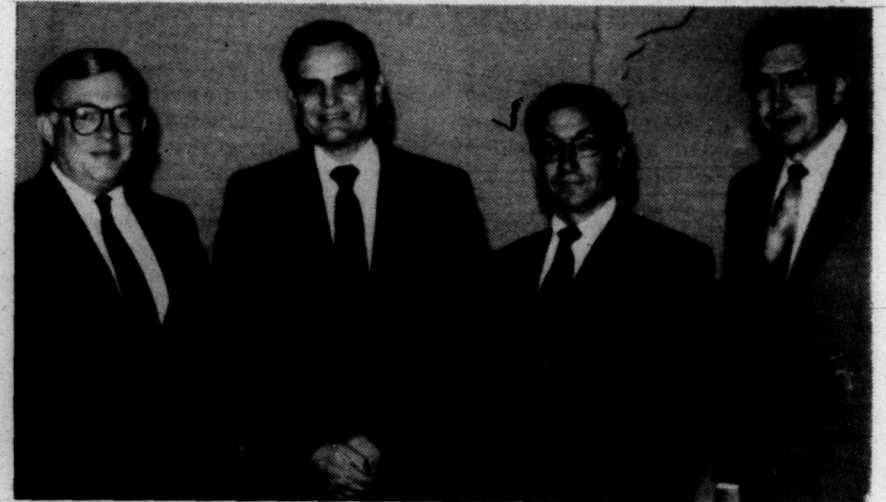
Alcohol use increases the chances of getting cancer in the digestive tract, liver, and colon.

Drinking by expectant mothers can cause birth defects and is a major cause of mental retardation in children.

These are facts you're not apt to find in the carefree, exciting, romantic world of commercials.

Chemical People Newsletter,
Nov./Dec. 1990

CAC elects officers



The Christian Action Committee trustees of the Mississippi Baptist Convention met on Dec. 11. Charles Bagawell, pastor of Carriage Hills Church in Southaven, was elected to a second term as chairman; William P. Smith III, director of missions of Lee Association, was elected to a second term as vice-chairman; and Jerry Massey, pastor of First Church of Oxford, was elected as secretary. Paul Jones, executive director-treasurer, brought a recommendation that Sheila Marler be employed as administrative secretary to the Commission effective Jan. 1, 1991. Pictured, left to right, are Jones, Smith, Bagwell, and Massey.

IRAN

From page 3

but the news did not reach sources outside Iran until mid-December.

Soodmand reportedly was accused of spying, a charge friends dismissed as preposterous. "He was harmless, a meek man who will be remembered for his quiet spirit," said one man. After becoming a Christian believer, Soodmand began a ministry that spanned 24 years.

He first worked with the Iranian Bible Society as a colporteur, selling Bibles across the country. He later worked as evangelist in a Christian hospital in Isfahan and also worked with a mission for the blind.

It was in the latter ministry that he met his wife, Mahtab, who is blind. She was allowed to visit her husband only twice during his imprisonment and was denied a final meeting with him before the execution, sources said. Since his death, she reportedly has suffered a breakdown and is being cared for by church friends. The couple has four children, ages 10 to 15.

Iranian-born Christians in the West who monitor church ministry inside Iran said the execution is part of a new, harsh round of systematic repression against Christians — especially those who are former Muslims.

"Now they are willing to kill," said one Iranian Christian leader now living outside Iran.

Several believers have disappeared during the past year and are feared dead, sources said. Mehdi Dibaj, another church leader and ex-Muslim, has been held in prison for more than five years. Christian workers now are more concerned than ever about his fate.

Along with the closing of some churches and Christian bookstores, Christian conferences in Iran have been banned. Government approval now is required for Christian weddings or even church outings. Authorities have warned Iranian Christians not to contact the West.

Last July authorities closed down the Iranian Bible Society after repeatedly calling in the society's general secretary for questioning. After the leader left the country, the government Office of Religious Minorities confiscated the society's files and locked staff members out of their building. The government announced the society had been dissolved and that permission would not be given for it to operate again.

Before the closing, the government

had increasingly impeded the society's work. The group was not allowed to send its annual report to churches in the country or import Persian-language Bibles or Scripture portions.

When the Bible society sought permission to print a gospel portion, the Office of Religious Minorities said Jesus could not be referred to as "Son of God" or "Lord," but only as "prophet."

The designation of "prophet" is given to Jesus in the Koran, the holy book of Islam. The society did not agree to such changes, since that would have altered the Bible's text.

Amid the increasing repression, Iranian Christian leaders outside Iran said they find published comments by a key Iranian government leader especially ironic. The Dec. 12 issue of Kayhan Hava, an Iranian newspaper, quoted Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of the Iranian judiciary, as saying: "No one is in jail in Iran for his beliefs." The front-page article defended Iran's use of the death penalty and rejected as biased a report on human rights in Iran prepared by a United Nations envoy.

Christianity is one of the four religions officially recognized by the Islamic government of Iran, but Iranian Christian observers said that in practice the recognition includes only ethnic Armenians and Assyrians, not believers from a Muslim background.

The Christian population in Iran totals less than 1 percent of the nation's nearly 66 million people.

The new repression probably is an effort by the Iranian government to head off increasing response to the gospel across Iran, they said. Efforts by Christians inside Iran and Christian radio programs broadcast into the country from outside are increasingly effective in presenting the gospel.

Based on frequent reports from Christians who have left the country, one observer said, "I feel there are thousands in Iran who are interested in Christianity. Possibly this has alarmed the government."

Disillusionment with Islam has helped produce a "significant minority group" of Muslim converts, he said. Pressures brought by the government have produced more unity among Christians and strengthened their witness, he added.

Some other Iranians also reportedly are uncomfortable with government repressive measures against Christians. Sources said when prison officials were relaying news of Soodmand's execution, one employee wept openly.

Devotional

The Great Commission

By Linda Reeves

What does the Great Commission — reaching Mississippi and the world for Jesus — mean to you?

An experience in Chicago brought the meaning of the Great Commission home to me. The conference was over and as Sunday School teachers began to leave, a woman came to me to share what Mississippi Baptists had meant in her life. She had grown up in a Catholic home, but had not been strong in her beliefs. Her husband had grown up in an orphanage without religious influence. They were married and moved to a Mississippi town. Their preschool son was mentally retarded and needed daycare while the parents worked.

A Southern Baptist church opened its doors to this family by providing child care for their son. It was through reaching out first in love and meeting their needs and then reaching out to share the gospel that this family became Christians and active church members. When they moved to Chicago, she wondered if they would find a Southern Baptist church.

One of Chicago's Southern Baptist churches was found and now they are Sunday School teachers and have taken an active role in the church. She wanted to say thank you to Mississippi Baptists for caring and sharing the gospel. She also wanted to thank Mississippi Baptists for caring for churches in Chicago through the Mississippi/Illinois partnership.

In Matt. 28:19-20, the Great Commission can be seen as having four basic goals: (1) GOING in the authority and power of Christ; (2) MAKING disciples; (3) TEACHING them to observe; and (4) REJOICING in the fellowship of the ever-present Lord.

How do you respond to the Great Commission? Do you: (1) REFUSE TO GET INVOLVED? Not Jesus. We read of his countless interactions with people. Matthew was a tax collector and became one of his closest associates. (2) TELL OTHERS WHAT TO DO? How easy it is to tell people what to do without getting involved. (3) GET INVOLVED? Jesus even spoke to a despised and hated Samaritan woman. He offered her a cup of everlasting water so that she would never go thirsty again.

There are people in Mississippi who need the gospel. Reach out and share the gospel, bringing Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

Reeves is consultant, Sunday School Department, MBCB.



Reeves

RELIGION IN REVIEW: 1990

By Doug Trouten

(EP) — In the late 1980s, Arkansas prophecy buff Edgar Whisenant excited Christians with his widely-distributed booklet "88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will be in 1988." Even more surprising was his follow-up booklet published the next year, explaining that due to an unfortunate error in Edgar's calculations, the Lord would actually be returning for his church in 1989.

He was wrong, of course. Both 1988 and 1989 came and went, while the church stayed right here. We're certainly two years closer to the Lord's return, but it hasn't happened yet.

But the world is an increasingly exciting place to live, and Christians who have been following current events with a newspaper in one hand and a Bible in the other have probably been noticing an increasing similarity between the two. In fact, the 24th chapter of Matthew sounds surprisingly like a review of 1990.

Edgar Whisenant, where are you now?

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what (shall be) the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

The world hasn't ended yet, but don't tell that to followers of cult leader Elizabeth Clare Prophet, who spent much of 1990 underground, talking about declining planetary karma and taking inventory of dried foods. The cult leader and about 2,000 of her followers built bomb shelters near Yellowstone National Park to prepare for a nuclear war she believed would begin March 15. It didn't.

But there were plenty of other surprises in 1990, things pundits might see as signs of the approaching apocalypse. Lutheran theologian Richard John Neuhaus announced that the Reformation was over, and joined the Catholic church. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board elected a woman vice-president. An evangelical was chosen to lead the Anglican church. And after two years of study an Episcopal diocesan task force came to the surprising conclusion that the "Bible is the word of God."

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."

New Zealanders heard rumors of drivers picking up hitchhiking angels who told them Christ was coming soon. The faithful crowded a church in Colfax, Calif. this year to see a miraculous vision of the Virgin Mary — or a reflection of sunlight, depending on your point of view. Others flocked to a Greek Orthodox Church in Queens to witness a painting of Saint Irene that reportedly wept blood.

Christians in various parts of the world have been reporting strange phenomena. In some cases, these phenomena have been attributed to the presence of angels or other supernatural beings. In other cases, they have been attributed to the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Mormon church doesn't believe Moon is the Messiah, but it does

believe in keeping up with the times. Some sacred Mormon rituals were changed in an effort to make the church more acceptable to women and other faiths. The 7.3 million-member cult dropped a temple practice in which women pledged obedience to their husbands, and did away with the portrayal of non-Mormon clergy as servants of Satan.

On the subject of deception, the year ended with disturbing reports that Nora Lam's ambitious movie project "China Cry" could perhaps be more accurately named "China Lie." Though Lam's supporters say critics are motivated by "jealousy and vendettas," troublesome differences between Lam's version of her life and the recollections of others have called into question her once-respected ministry.

The founder of another once-respected ministry, PTL, continued to languish in prison in 1990. In a country where rapists and murderers can be in and out of prison in a decade, Jim Bakker continues to serve a 45-year sentence for overlooking his timeworn con. Bakker was earning it cents an hour cleaning toilets, and that money is being taken by the government to pay for his legal fees. When he is released, he will have to pay for the cost of his imprisonment.

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all (these things) must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

The big news of 1990 was the Persian Gulf. Saddam Hussein did his part for Arab unity in August by unifying Kuwait with Iraq, an action which sent sales of Hal Lindsey's Late Great Planet Earth through the roof. Among foreigners trapped in Kuwait during the invasion were Christian missionaries. Some women and children were released by Hussein; a Southern Baptist couple escaped Kuwait by driving through 45 miles of desert in a bullet-riddled car, and all were eventually released when Hussein set his hostages free in a "good will" gesture that still left him out of the running for this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

In response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. sent a negotiating team of 400,000 military personnel to the region. Most are stationed in Saudi Arabia, the country of Islam's holy city Mecca, and traditionally one of the most religiously regressive Islamic regimes.

U.S. troops have been ordered to avoid giving offense to their Moslem "hosts," and have gone as far as to reclassify chaplains as "morale officers" and forbid the wearing of religious symbols. The Saudis have responded to our sensitivity by denying an entry visa to actress Brooke Shields, who had planned to entertain the troops as part of Bob Hope's USO show.

Saudi Arabia has been one of the world's least evangelized nations, but the troop buildup has led to the greatest influx ever of Bibles and Christians in the region. While Saudi officials have apparently intercepted some Bibles sent by domestic mail, Bibles sent through the military postal system are reportedly being delivered. Religious influence cuts both ways; some U.S. troops have converted to Islam after being exposed to that ancient faith in Saudi Arabia.

Support for U.S. military intervention was almost unanimous after the invasion of Kuwait, but has weakened since then. In November, to the surprise of absolutely nobody, the National Council of Churches issued a strong condemnation of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf. Speaking on behalf of the dwindling number of churches it represents, the National Council of Churches called for the immediate withdrawal of most U.S. forces from the Middle East. The nation's Catholic bishops didn't go quite as far, but did call on President Bush to exercise "restraint."

Hussein has played to world opinion masterfully. He's bided his time while Western resolve falters. He's worked to link his occupation of Kuwait with the Palestinian question in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And he's made small concessions in an effort to get the United Nations to forget about his little spat with Kuwait and get back to the real business — hating Israel.

Despite the global crisis sparked by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the United Nations assembly was able to find time to condemn Israel for a violent clash between a small number of Israeli police and a mob of rock-throwing Islamic fundamentalists. The UN resolution did not address the wisdom of throwing rocks at armed police officers, and Israelis continue to die unnoticed at the hands of Palestinians.

Though the visible conflict now pits Iraq against most of the rest of the world, an emerging conflict is the one between Islam and Christianity. Islamic organizations in the U.S. intensified their missionary efforts in 1990. The American Council of Mosques is preparing the way for a nationwide "proclamation crusade," and the U.S.-based Zwemer Institute of Muslim Studies said the fast-growing Islamic faith was having a greater impact in the world's cities than Christianity.

"There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

The giant earthquake that was supposed to rock the Midwestern United States never materialized, but people elsewhere felt the earth move under their feet — including those in the Philippines, where a quake registered 7.7 on the Richter scale struck near Manila. One casualty of that quake was the Christian College of the Philippines, a six-story structure which collapsed, killing or injuring more than 150.

Children continued to go to bed hungry in 1990, despite the heroic efforts of international relief organizations. Bread for the World called on the nations of the world to free up money for hunger relief by reducing military spending by 60 percent by the year 2000, but the actions of a certain power-mad dictator with a million-man army have put that proposal on the back burner for now.

The United Church of Christ in Minnesota accepted an openly homosexual congregation into full membership, the first time a major Christian denomination in the U.S. had extended membership to a homosexual church. And while the UCC was inviting homosexuals in, the Roman Catholic church in Minneapolis was trying to get them out. The church was fined \$23,500 by the city's human rights department for evicting a homosexual Catholic group from a church-owned facility.

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my

name's sake."

1990 was a year of religious persecution for Christians around the world.

The Canadian director of the U.S.-based ASSIST ministry was arrested and held without charge in Cuba for four days when he traveled to the country to meet with Cuban religious leaders.

In China, the pastor of the nation's largest house church, Samuel Lam, was arrested and threatened with execution, but later released and told not to preach any more.

An Assemblies of God pastor in Iran was tortured and executed by the government in a new wave of repression sweeping the land. Particularly vulnerable in the new crackdown are Iranian Christians who have converted from the Moslem faith. The Iranian Bible Society was shut down.

Three Egyptian Christians who converted from Islam were arrested and imprisoned by the Egyptian government, leading to protests from the organization Christians Concerned for Justice in the Middle East, which cited "clear evidence of an organized plan on the part of Egyptian officials to imprison a group of Egyptian Christians for no other reason than that they are converts from Islam."

In Africa, rebels attacked a World Vision camp in Mali, causing \$600,000 in damage and temporarily halting the ministry's relief work in that country. Government forces in Liberia invaded a Lutheran church compound, killing hundreds of refugees, including women and sleeping children. Most Christian missionaries have fled Liberia; one independent Baptist worker was killed by Liberian government soldiers Aug. 16.

The government of Bangladesh reversed a decision to ban a particular version of the Bible. Nepal's government promised a new era of religious freedom. Cambodia opened its borders to Christian missionaries. Religious leaders of Nicaragua reported that they are able to spread the gospel with greater freedom than ever before. Evangelicals gained the right to teach religion in the public schools of Portugal, a staunchly Roman Catholic nation.

Even Albania, for years the most oppressive, atheistic government in the world, has begun to lighten up. As part of a reform package passed in May by the nation's parliament, "religious propaganda" was dropped from the list of crimes against the state. Christians have begun attending religious services in growing numbers to celebrate their new-found freedom, though much repression remains.

The U.S. saw its share of religious intolerance as well. Books by Chris-

tian counselor James Dobson were pulled from a public school library in Mankato, Minn., by school officials who cited their "scriptural foundation" as a disqualifying factor. Florida high school students were told they are not allowed to give copies of religious literature to their friends on school property. A Pennsylvania fifth grader was humiliated in front of her peers for choosing "the power of God" as her theme for an assignment of "power."

At this rate, the late '90s may see a flood of U.S. Christians fleeing to Albania and Nepal in search of religious liberty.

"And then shall many be offended."

While the U.S. may not allow government funds to be used to display religious symbols, it will allow tax dollars to be used to desecrate objects of faith. The discovery that public money had been used to fund works of art such as a photo of a crucifix in urine led to an outcry against the National Endowment for the Arts that fell on deaf ears in Washington.

Critics of the National Endowment for the Arts didn't address questions of what art should be permitted, but rather spoke to the issue of who should foot the bill for offensive artwork. Still, the media framed the debate as a censorship question, and Congress wound up passing legislation that increases funding for the National Endowment for the Arts without any meaningful restriction on its use.

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations."

Evangelist Billy Graham, who does more to spread the gospel in a year than most people do in a lifetime, bounced back from rib surgery earlier in the year to hold his biggest crusade ever, a Hong Kong-based outreach that brought the gospel message to an estimated 100 million people. The crusade was broadcast in 48 languages to 30 countries, and enormous crowds responded to the message.

The 72-year-old Graham is scheduled to conduct a similar crusade in Argentina in 1991, but may find that his work's already been done by Pat Robertson. Robertson sponsored a media blitz in Argentina, Nicaragua, and Central America that he says resulted in 6.5 million decisions for Christ — four times the number of conversions from the previous 30 years of ministry.

Luis Palau was active in 1990, telling Hindus in India "you were never a cow," telling crowds in Romania that "atheism is dead," and leading souls to Christ in Okinawa and Osaka. Palau has also begun the more thankless task of spreading the gospel in the U.S., an area he had previously avoided because of the tremendous job done by Graham in his prime.

Conclusion

Are these the end times Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24? Your guess is as good as Edgar Whisenant's. What can be said with certainty is that 1990 brought us one year closer to the Lord's return.

It is also certain that the year held unparalleled opportunities for evangelism, and 1991 promises more of the same. While George Bush and Saddam Hussein are practicing for Armageddon, the rest of us can work on preaching "this gospel of the kingdom . . . in all the world for a witness unto all nations."

Trouten is director of Evangelical Press News Service.

Faces and places

by Anne Washburn McWilliams

Beside the flowing Pearl

Not until a few weeks ago did I know that J. P. Harrington, the same man who started Parkway Church in Jackson, also instituted an old men's home in the area of Byram that later was moved and became the Willard Bond Home at Madison.

Gordy Hughes, who is retired and lives at 857 N. Jefferson St., Jackson, remembered that fact, because her parents worked at the old men's home when it was at Byram. After her father, J. L. Hughes, a Baptist minister, retired, Harrington asked him to look after the home. Hughes became the manager and his wife, Lottie, supervised the cooking of meals for the old men.

Gordy was on the staff of First Church, Quitman, for a good many

years as music and education director, and also part of the time as pastor's secretary. Before that, she had been on the staff of 15th Avenue Church, Meridian. Also she had taught school.

Gordy let me read the following letter written to a friend by her sister, Ruth Milliren of Cushing, Oklahoma. It was penned on the banks of the Pearl River at "the old swinging bridge" near Byram. In it, Ruth recalls days she and her parents spent at the old men's home. Gordy told me, "Ruth's surname is German. She married a man who made the Army his career. The two traveled about quite a bit; then both went to college. Ruth majored in English, and taught school. She likes to write."

Dear Gracie:

I am out in the woods sitting on a sand bar beside the flowing Pearl River. I wish you could hear the sound of the water as it's flowing downstream. This was my choice to come out here instead of to the mall or other places where so many people are — a serene, peaceful, quiet spot where all I hear is the birds chirping and the sound of the flowing river. I came to this particular place because I have fond memories of it.

When I was 14 and 15, we lived near here. My parents and I had moved here (Byram) to manage an old men's home. In the summer we came to this place on their days off and we brought a lunch and would stay all day. My dad fished. Gordy, who always came home in the summers when her school was out, and I would swim in the river. Mama would just sit on the bank all day.

Ruth Milliren

What really makes it unique here is a hanging bridge over the river. The bridge is solely supported by two large cables — no pilings underneath. It isn't in use any more. Concrete posts are blocking off each end of the bridge. A person can walk across it. Still sturdy looking, it has wooden planks across it, about three inches thick and nine inches wide. Some of them have sap that has oozed out of them.

Being out here brings back some sweet memories. I love this country down here. I remember roaming around in these woods. I don't know why, but all my life I have loved to be out like this. Maybe being out alone in the woods caused me to be so introspective. I had this affinity for God's marvelous creation in nature. Maybe this is a substitute for my trip to Maine. It's way away from things.

On the side of the river where I am sitting is a rather steep, slanting sandy bank. Across the river is solid, sandy colored rock which stands straight up for about 12 feet above the river level. Some still pools in the river are further down. And in the water's stillness I can see the reflections of the rock river bank. Farther on down the river is a bend.

In these surroundings I can truly see the Lord and I can hear him in all these sounds. I brought my Bible with me. I read again the Song of Solomon. I am determined to master that book. No more beautiful, passionate work of literature has ever been written. "The king has taken me into his banquet hall; his banner over me is love." That is what is going to happen at the marriage supper of Jesus and his bride, the church.

I really can sense the Lord's presence here. The trees are so beautiful, so large, and growing so close together. I can think of the Psalms — all the imagery in them about hills, trees, rivers, mountains, hills, pastures. Of course, there's a lot of war imagery, too — fortresses, refugees, bows, swords, arrows. But David's life was spent both fighting wars and living out in the open.

You should just be here. Some large, white, puffy clouds are moving up in the sky. Course I don't know if you are a nature freak like I am, but you could sure do some painting from where I am sitting. A little way down, an old dead tree has fallen over into the river. You could walk further down on the river bank and paint the swinging bridge. And the trees are so many different shades of green. Leaves of some trees are already beginning to turn to yellows and browns. The trees are of so many different varieties, elms, oaks, pines, some small cedars. It's hot today, but out here a breeze is blowing, and it's lovely. I am very comfortable.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech . . . and there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

Much love,
Ruth

Thursday, January 10, 1991

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

Mississippi women make WMU connections in Peru

Part 3 of 4
By Vicki Heath

The following article is condensed from journal excerpts written by Vicki Heath of Jackson while on volunteer mission trip to Peru with Ashley McCaleb, Jackson; Bobbie Foster, Prentiss; and Janet Murray, Jackson.

September 22, Saturday

Another early departure, but Mary Jo had some coffee and warm Peruvian bread for us. We sat in the Landrover with Karl at the wheel and started the "memorable" ride to Cajamarca. We made a steady climb on the worst road imaginable. In the valley floor many tropical plants were growing: sugar cane, rice, coconuts, mangoes, bananas. Then the steep mountains, dry and dusty. As we climbed, we began to see more mountain people herding goats, cows, sheep, and burros. The women are walking along, spinning wool into yarn on a spindle or knitting. The women are dressed in layer after layer of wool skirts. They wear brightly colored shawls or blankets and carry everything on their backs: babies, bundles of all kinds, large loads of wood. They wear unique large-brimmed straw hats. Only one or two hats are purchased in a lifetime and they are used for everything.

Along the way, we passed a large hydro-electric dam, but it has not yet been turned on. The drive was beautiful, interesting, bumpy and dirty, all six hours of it.

When we got to Cajamarca, what a sight! A mountain town, mostly dirt, deeply rutted streets, pigs, goats, sheep, donkeys, dogs everywhere, HUGE potholes. There are thermal springs here and public hot baths. We first went to the home of Ken and Linda Bowie. We were met by their twins, Melissa and Maria, holding their pet rabbits. We were quickly joined by little sister Lori. We then went to the home of Margaret and Larry Tucker for lunch and met sons Jonathan and David. They have only been on the field about a year.

We split up and stayed in two separate homes. Janet, Karl, and Peggy stayed with the Bowles; Bobbie and I stayed with Kim Cartwright, a journeyman from New Mexico. Kim is in Cajamarca to teach the MKs. We stayed in a large empty house. Every door had to be locked and unlocked, and we were a long way from the front gate. We had to have four keys to get from the gate to our room, triple bolts. But when the guns started shooting out front the next night, I was glad I was behind four locked doors. I don't see how Kim stays in such a large place alone.

Our conference started at 4:00. As always, there was no electricity, so it was very dim light at the church. Each church was completely different, and this was no exception; as



The "Peru connectors" were, left to right, Bobbie Foster, Ashley McCaleb, Vicki Heath, and Janet Murray.

many of the women were mountain women who had walked for many miles. To look out and see the church packed was a thrilling sight.

The mountain women were fascinated with my pierced ears (they don't wear earrings) and my wedding rings. We had over 70 in attendance, again beyond our greatest expectations. I had 14 in my conference, some presidents of their GA groups (Ac-teens). As always, they were attentive and responsive, carefully taking notes. I had some women who did not speak Spanish, so I spoke English, Margaret Tucker translated to Spanish, Ynez translated to Quechua Indian dialect.

When we returned to the sanctuary for our recap and testimony time, we were blessed with generator electricity followed by the real thing about 8:00. We dismissed for a while, went outside, tables were set up in the sanctuary, and supper was served. I was served a bowl of rice with a chicken's tail on top!

But it was during this meal that I received affirmation for my purpose in making this trip. Many, many times before I left home and several times on the trip I wondered if teaching WMU presidents was of any real value in this culture. During the serving of the food, there was suddenly a lull in activities; the people seemed like sheep without a shepherd. Karl remarked to me, "They've lost their leader." Ynez, the WMU director, had run home to get more spoons, and everything sort of ground to a halt. It was then that I realized that it is important in this culture for an organization to have a leader.

September 23, Sunday

After breakfast at the Bowles, we went to church. During the service, rain began to fall on the tin roof. It has been a long time since I had that experience. After church, we went home with Carlos Palacio, pastor, and his wife Ynez. Carlos is bi-vocational; he

also sells stoves. They live in an upper-middle class home. It had cement walls and floor, furniture, running water, and electricity (when it operates). They had a plate glass window that looked out on the chicken yard.

Ynez told us how grateful they were that we had come, how they had prayed for us for over 18 months. She had been so afraid we would not come. She said every day she expected a letter saying we were afraid to come because of terrorism. I gave Carlos one of our "Carols by Candlelight" programs. He read every word of it and carefully looked at every face in the choir. He was so thrilled when I told him he could keep it.

We returned to the Bowles where we watched the Velveteen Rabbit with the girls. One of the lines just struck me, "When you are real, it doesn't matter if you're shabby." How true! These ladies are so real, it doesn't matter if they are not as clean as others or if they are dressed differently.

We then drove to see Luke and Deana Smith. Luke has started the Baptist gym. They have lots of exercise equipment, all of it put together by Luke from scrap iron. It is the first entry point the missionaries have found to reach the university students. The participants are charged \$1 a month and are required to attend weekly Bible study. That Sunday, there were 100 at Bible study. Many come to Bible study just to get to see the inside of the gym. It is the newest "in" place in Cajamarca.

We then went to see the first water-well dug in Peru by Southern Baptists, and the university where World Hunger funds are used to conduct programs with guinea pigs and alpacas. Llamas and alpacas are not raised in Cajamarca, though there is better grazing, alpaca wool is much more valuable, and alpacas do not eat as much as sheep.

(To be continued)

Meals on funeral days become Corinth church ministry

By Anne W. McWilliams

Ten people died within 11 weeks, in the community around Corinth Church, Simpson County. "That's the most funerals I can remember that close together," said Mrs. Billy Guest, wife of the pastor of Corinth Church.

Food preparation at the time of a death has become a special ministry

of that church. If a member of the church or community dies, or a relative of one of the church members dies and the funeral is to be somewhere in the area — either at Corinth or a nearby church, or at a nearby (usually in Magee) funeral home, women of Corinth spring into action.

Whereas people everywhere in Mississippi usually take food to the home of the person who has died, at Corinth they vary this custom a bit.

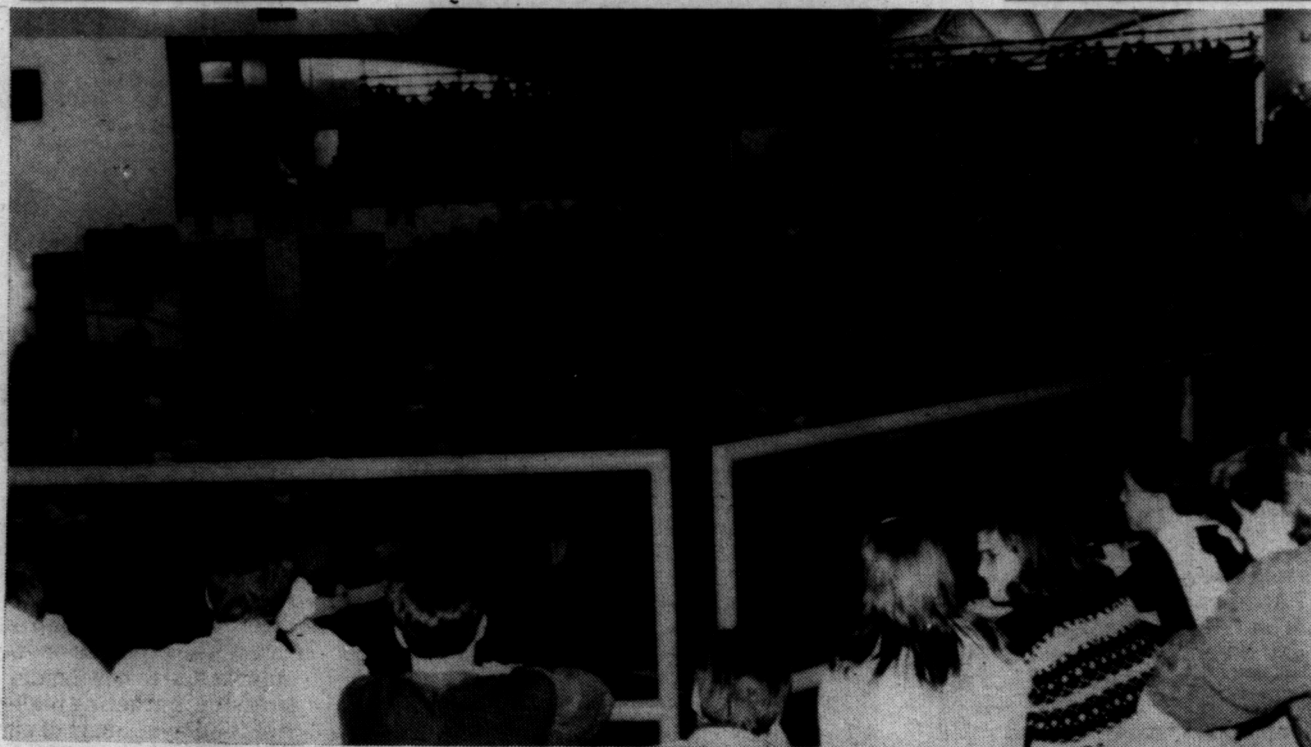
They will serve lunch at the church for family members and friends of the deceased who wish to go there to eat. Or if the family requests it, they will serve the meal at a designated home.

They will serve lunch or supper, at a home or at the church, according to the family's wishes.

If they serve lunch at the church, which is most often the case, they invite the family members to return and eat supper there too, so that the always plentiful left-overs will not be wasted. Or they will, if the family

would like that better, prepare box suppers from the leftovers for family members to take home with them.

Who furnishes the food? In the beginning, the members brought all the food. Then the church voted to buy the meat. Besides that, anyone and everyone who wishes to bring a dish (See CORINTH on page 9)



Pictured are some of the 2,500 young people attending the Youth Evangelism Conference in the coliseum at Mississippi College.

Youth Evangelism Conference held at MC

"Delight thyself also in the Lord," was the theme for the Youth Evangelism Conference at Mississippi College, Dec. 27-28. The "Delights," youth drama team and choir of First Church, Jackson, led the 2,500 young people in worship.

Jerry Pipes, youth evangelist, spoke on witnessing. "Youth need to hear the gospel from other youth," he declared.

His second message was, "When You Do Wrong, But You Want to Do Right."

Chris and Dianne Machen led the singing and provided action songs. Lisa Leavell sang, "Surely, the Lord Is in This Place," and gave a personal testimony on God's power to deliver.

Sheldon Gooch, one-time prisoner and now a prisoner of Christ, sang,

"People Need the Lord." Frank Pollard, pastor of First Church, Jackson, told the youths to give your life to the person who made it.

Humor and serious comedy was provided by Phil and Russ. Rich Malone was program chairman. There were 132 decisions made with 25 being professions of faith.

Southern grants degrees

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Approximately 190 graduates received degrees from Southern Seminary during commencement exercises Dec. 14. Seminary Chancellor Duke K. McCall, president of Southern Seminary, 1951-82, was commencement speaker.

Three from Mississippi received degrees. They were Tony Dale Pounders, Booneville, master of divinity; Terry Harold Garvin, Booneville, master of divinity; and Susan Renee Nash, Southaven, master of social work.

SWBTS graduates six from state

Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, awarded 284 degrees in its commencement ceremonies conducted Dec. 14.

Mississippians receiving masters' degrees were Jeffrey Alan Floyd, Greenwood, master of divinity with biblical languages; Regina Ann Harlow, Aberdeen, master of arts in marriage and family counseling; Byron Lee Malone, Jackson, master of arts in religious education; and Jeffery Lynn Moffitt, Southaven, master of divinity.

Receiving associate degrees were John Wayne Darty, Aberdeen, associate of divinity; and Marshall Franklin Pettigrew, Pearl, associate in religious education.

Wells graduates from SERTS

Diplomas were presented to 61 graduating seniors during the fall commencement ceremonies, Dec. 15, at Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

A Mississippian, Robert Dewey Wells Jr. of McCool, received the master of divinity degree.

Three conferences for senior adults will take place

Three conferences for senior adults will take place at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian, in May.

Two will be three-day meetings, May 20-23 and May 23-25. The third will be for five days, May 27-31.

General theme of the three programs will be "Seniors Reaching Seniors." Participants will be given theme books for group study as part of their registration fees.

The May 20-22 sessions will feature Oliver Ladnier as preacher. He is pastor of First Church, Magee. Dean Harlan of Clearwater, Fla., will teach sessions for leaders of senior adults. Theme book will be "The Diary of a Country Doctor," by W.W. Walley. And Petal Harvey Senior Adult Choir will sing.

The May 23-25 program will feature Larry Kennedy as preacher. He is pastor of First Church, Laurel. Harlan will lead the leaders and Walley's

book will be taught.

The May 27-31 conference will feature Ed Deuschle as preacher. He is pastor of First Church, Pontotoc. Horace Kerr, contract consultant for family ministry for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will lead the leaders. The theme book will be "Bind Us Together," by Pat Gullledge.

The first two conferences cost \$65.25. The third is \$120. To make reservations write Gulfshore after March 1, enclosing \$30 per person for a deposit, to Frank Simmons, manager, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Henderson Point, Pass Christian, MS 39571.



Ladnier



Deuschle



Kennedy

Church business administrators to meet

A conference for church business administrators will take place, Jan. 24, in Jackson.

The conference, which will meet at Woodland Hills Church, Jackson, will include Doug Day, Bill Sellers, and Tim Holcomb as speakers.

Day, vice president in charge of Annuity Board Property and Casualty insurance, will introduce the new property and casualty insurance program available to ministers and churches.

Sellers, Annuity representative for the MBCB, will discuss medical, life, and disability insurance, as well as the annuity program and church staff salaries.

Holcomb, a staffer with the Baptist Sunday School Board, will discuss the new book "A Maintenance Manual for Southern Baptist Churches."

The conference begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes at 4 p.m. Participants will be on their own for lunch.

There is no charge for this conference, but pre-registration is requested. Write Church Administration Department, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

For further information contact Julius Thompson at the MBCB, phone 968-3800, or James Webster, director of church services for Hinds-Madison Association, phone 362-8676.

Federal judge restricts investigation of churches

WASHINGTON (BP) — A federal district judge has ruled that government investigators do not have "unfettered discretion" to infiltrate church services.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Roger Strand in a lawsuit filed by four Lutheran and Presbyterian congregations and their parent denominations imposed new restrictions on the government's ability to infiltrate religious services.

The churches filed suit in 1986 challenging the covert investigation of churches suspected of involvement in the sanctuary movement by undercover informants hired by the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service. Court records show that undercover informants attended church services and on at least one occasion, secretly tape-recorded a worship service.

The undercover investigation was made public during the trial of several sanctuary movement members who had been charged with conspiracy and smuggling Central Americans into the United States.

While Judge Strand's ruling did not prohibit investigation of church activities, it held that the government's investigation must be conducted in good faith.

"The government is constitutionally precluded from unbridled and inappropriate covert activity which has as its purpose or objective the abridgment of the First Amendment freedoms of those involved," the ruling stated.

Additionally, the ruling said investigators "must adhere scrupulously to the scope and extent of the invitation to participate that may have been extended or offered to them."

Peter Baird, an attorney representing the plaintiffs, said the ruling means that when the invitation extended is for worship, anything outside that invitation, such as tape-recording the service, is not permissible.

A broad coalition of religious groups, including the Baptist Joint Committee, joined the case in support of the churches out of concern for First Amendment and other rights.

"This case is of critical importance to all churches regardless of their views on the sanctuary movement," said Oliver Thomas, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee, a Washington-based religious liberty agency representing 10 national Baptist groups.

"Churches have First Amendment rights that must be taken into account — even by the Justice Department," Thomas said.

The Baptist Joint Committee, in a statement approved in 1986, condemned "the use of paid informants, undercover agents, and surreptitious tactics by any government agency investigating religious organizations as improper and illegal when less intrusive means of investigation or fact gathering are available."

The rumor still is not true

The following editorial by Don McGregor was printed in the BAPTIST RECORD Jan. 2, 1986. The issue has come up again, and the rumor still is not true.

Comes now the season again for embarrassment over RM 2493, the petition that crops up again and again with the allegation that Madelyn Murray O'Hair is trying to get all religious broadcasting thrown off the air.

Madelyn Murray O'Hair, as all know, is an atheist. She would be delighted, no doubt, if all religious broadcasting were put off the air. But she did not initiate this petition.

In 1974 two California men filed RM 2493 with the Federal Communications Commission with the hope that the commission would license no additional religious radio stations. In 1975 the FCC denied the petition, and the matter was dropped.

Two things need to be remembered, Madelyn Murray O'Hair had nothing to do with RM 2493. And RM 2493 died in 1975.

Petitions continue to crop up from time to time, however, asking that Christians would protest to the FCC about RM 2493. And they do, by the hundreds of thousands. The mail load at the FCC has been staggering just to cope with the letters concerning RM 2493.

The best way to deal with the matter is to ignore it.

Staff changes

Johnson Creek Church, Greene County, has called Keith Thompson as pastor, effective Nov. 4. A native of Petal, he received his education at William Carey College. He will be ordained on Jan. 13.

Edward Pendergrast has recently retired from Glendale Church, Leland, and moved to Derma where he plans to spend his retirement doing supply, interim, and revivals. He can be contacted at P. O. Box 55, Derma, MS 38839 or call 628-8578.

Beacon Church, Hattiesburg, has called Keith Manuel as pastor, effective Dec. 2. A native of Ocean Springs, he is a graduate of William Carey College and New Orleans Seminary. He served as minister of youth at Calvary Church, Pascagoula.



Manuel

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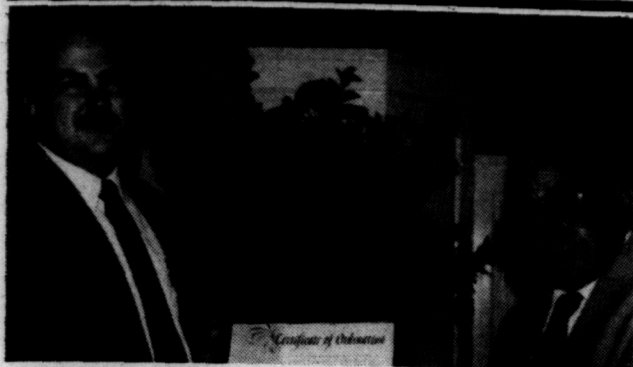
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Names in the news

Thursday, January 10, 1991

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9



New Harmony Church (Neshoba) recently ordained Scotty Goldman into the gospel ministry. He is presently serving as director of campus ministry at Livingston University, Livingston, Ala., and director of missions in Bibbee Association. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Goldman of Philadelphia, he is a 1990 graduate of Southwestern Seminary. His wife is the former Rita Dobbs. Pictured presenting the certificate of ordination is Charles McCollum, pastor.

Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven, honored Homer Case at a dedication service for serving 46 years as minister of music. Case was presented a dedication plaque and several gifts including an old-fashioned radio. Case sang gospel music with quartets on radio for many years. Roy Dixon is now minister of music and Sammy J. McDonald is the pastor.



The Honeycutt family of Pleasant Hill Church, Columbus, has not missed Sunday School in 18 years. The children have never missed a Sunday since birth. Barry, Kathy, and David have a perfect attendance for 18 years. Daniel has a 16-year perfect attendance and Bethany has a perfect attendance for all seven years of her life. They are also involved in other services of the church.



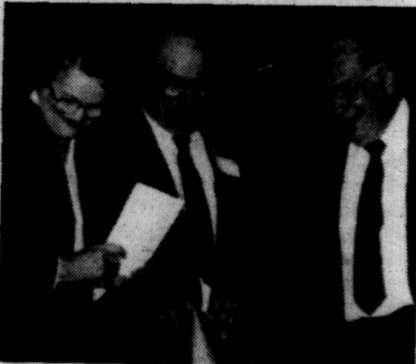
Harvey Ellis, minister of students at First Church, Clinton, leads a seminar, "In the Local Church and College," during a recent Student Missions Conference at New Orleans Seminary. Nearly 200 college students from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee attended the annual event with the theme, "Catch the Vision." (Photo by Breana Kent Payne)



William J. (Bill) Swinney is the new maintenance assistant at Central Hills Baptist Retreat. A Georgia native, Swinney is a graduate of the University of Georgia. He and his wife, Shelley, have one son, John Armistead, age 2.



Clarke College Student Wives Organization, is composed largely of wives of ministerial students. Its members, pictured, are active in a number of facets of Clarke campus life, including assistance to newcomer couples to Clarke in becoming oriented to student life, and family management. Mrs. Faye Ruddick is sponsor-advisor.



J. B. Costilow was honored at Clarke College to celebrate his retirement as BSU director after 34 years of service. A "This is your Life" program was held during homecoming activities on Dec. 1. Mr. and Mrs. Costilow are pictured receiving a "bag of retirement gifts" from Artis Jackson, former coach and dean of men at Clarke College.

Ralph Hester former VP, MCB, dies

Ralph H. Hester, 81, of Jackson, an insurance executive, died of cancer at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center.

Services were held Dec. 21 at First Church, Jackson, with burial in Lakewood Memorial Park.

Hester, a longtime Jackson resident, was a partner in Hester & Hester Insurance Agency. He was chairman of the board of directors of Hester, Stockett & Thomas, P.A., and was a general agent with Pan-American Life Insurance Co. He was board of directors chairman of Church Finance, Inc.

Hester was a member of First Church. He served as supply officer for the Naval Aircraft Factory during World War II.

He also was past president of the board of trustees of the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village and former vice president of Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Survivors include wife, Mary; and 10 grandchildren.

Mississippi alumni of New Orleans Seminary recently elected Bobby Williamson, of Brandon, as president; Rick Spencer, of Amory, as president-elect; and Ken Anderson, of Slatton, as secretary of the state's N.O.B.T.S. Alumni Association.

During the Dec. 14 commencement at Southern Seminary, the seminary presented the E. Y. Mullins Denominational Service Award to Emmanuel L. McCall, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's black church extension division, and the George W. Norton Award to Joseph Stopher, a Louisville, Ky. attorney.

Jewell Kyzar dies at age 87

Jewell H. Kyzar, 87, retired Baptist minister, died of heart failure Dec. 29 at Memorial Hospital in Meadville. Services were held Dec. 31 at Brookhaven.

Kyzar, a long-time trustee of Blue Mountain College, had held pastorates in Lincoln and Franklin counties, at Lexington and Drew, and in Laurens, S.C. His final 18 years as pastor were spent at First Church, Greenwood. During those years, Kyzar led the way to the chartering of the North Greenwood Baptist Church. He retired in 1965.

He had served as a trustee with the Foreign Mission Board, SBC; as chairman of the Committee on Order of Business, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; and as a trustee of Mississippi College.

He was graduated from Mississippi College in 1928, and the college awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1949. He was also graduated from Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

He had preached on four continents, and had participated in a preaching mission to South Africa.

Survivors include Georgia, his wife of 59 years, and two sisters, Pearl Givens and Lola Smith, both of Brookhaven.

Gulfport leads enrollment gains at Carey College

Student enrollment gains, led by the Gulfport campus, are continuing at William Carey College, based on fall and winter term totals released recently by the institution's president, Jim Edwards. Fall undergraduate student headcount totals increased 50 percent, 10 percent, and 9 percent in Gulfport, Hattiesburg, and New Orleans, respectively.

Despite sharp cutbacks of some off-campus undergraduate and graduate programs, the college also had a student credit hour gain of 2 percent overall and an average undergraduate enrollment growth of nearly 16 percent on the three main campuses. Undergraduate credit hours for the fall and winter increased 43 percent, 15 percent and 4 percent for Gulfport, New Orleans, and Hattiesburg, respectively.

Winter term 1990 undergraduate enrollments in Gulfport were at the highest level in a decade and graduate enrollment has increased over 125 percent in Gulfport for both fall and

winter terms.

"One of the most positive factors in our enrollment growth has been in the proportion of full-time versus part-time students," stated Edwards. "In the fall of 1988, only 49 percent of our students were enrolled on a full-time basis. That number was up to 62 percent by the fall of 1990, which translates to greater financial stability, and for our academic programs on our three major campuses. Additionally, for the first time, all available apartment units are occupied on the Coast campus, which obviously strengthens our cash flow position on that debt service. The progress on the Coast is primarily due to new leadership and aggressive marketing under the direction of Bill Payne, dean of our Coast campus. These enrollment gains clearly helped the college in the full accreditation action taken recently by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools," Edwards concluded.

CORINTH

From page 7

or to give money to buy a dish is invited to do so. Anyone who does not want to, of course, is not required to do so.

Volunteers serve the meals and do the clean-up chores. Ten or 12 women regularly volunteer to do this because, as one said, they "enjoy the fellowship and the feeling that they are doing something to help at a time of grief."

The church does have a Hostess Committee with eight members, but this committee is in charge of other parties such as Christmas parties or wedding or anniversary parties, and not in charge of the meals at times of funerals.

About the meal-serving ministry, Mrs. Guest said of those who volunteer, "It is a blessing for us to be together. It is a joy to work together, because we are doing it to help others."

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Boyette earns degree at Golden Gate

Jeffrey Stone Boyette was among 52 individuals receiving degrees during mid-session commencement exercises on Dec. 18 at Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif.

Boyette, son of Byron and Elaine Boyette of Natchez, received the master of arts in Christian education degree. He is a graduate of Delta State University, Cleveland.

In a way, the main fault of all books is that they are too long. — Vauvenargues

Sight for the spiritually blind

By Benny Still

John 9:24-25, 28-30, 33-41

Several summers ago our youth choir presented a musical entitled "Positive I.D." Costumes for the program consisted of blue jeans and a dark colored T-shirt with the choir member's own hand print painted across the front. The whole idea of the musical was to help us discover our exact identity in relationship to the Lord. Many times we feel that we must lose ourselves in our service for the Lord and in the process we sometimes lose that special something that makes us unique.

Today's lesson will help us realize the importance of being open to the Lord Jesus in our daily living. If we can grasp the truths in the story of Jesus and the blind man he healed, perhaps we can incorporate into our lives the attitudes and actions that will make us receptive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. "One thing I do know, I was blind but now I see!" (vs. 25) What a testimony! It seems the Pharisees (church folk) were confounded by the miracle Jesus had performed in this man's life. They were so comfortable in their religiosity that they really didn't want to be bothered by anything that was

LIFE AND WORK

remotely spiritual. Their minds were already made up, they didn't want to be confused with facts. They hurled insults at the man who had been healed, shouting, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." (vss. 28-29)

It didn't seem to matter to the man who had been healed where Jesus had originated. To the Pharisees, this newly-sighted man said, "now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes." (vs. 30) "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing" (vs. 33) Does that scenario remind you of the TV news reporters who ask questions, get answers, and then spend the next 20 minutes trying to read something into the answer that was never there in the first place? These Pharisees had invited the healed man to testify. When he told them exactly what they wanted to hear, they became angry. Could it be that we, like the Pharisees, don't really want to hear the truth? That we had rather have the truth watered down to the point that it doesn't motivate us to action? Are we satisfied with our intellectual and moral arrogance to the point that it precludes our receptiveness to Jesus Christ? (vss. 24, 34)

Persons are receptive to Jesus Christ when they acknowledge his true identity and his life-changing power. Until that time, there is a wall of separation that can be scaled only by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit of God. How we need to recognize that the Holy Spirit's job is not only to convict of sin in the life of the unbeliever, but also to convict of sin in the life of the Christian. Our blind adherence to tradition and preconceived ideas hinders us from being effective in our walk with Jesus. It also keeps us from bearing fruit for the Master. (vss. 28-29) These Pharisees actually couldn't see the forest for the trees.

Later in our passage, when Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the man out, he found him and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." (vss. 35-36) Jesus Christ reveals himself to those persons who are receptive to him. Phillip Landgrave wrote a Christmas musical many years ago and put it this way: "When Jesus comes, he comes to simple folk like you and me. When Jesus comes, he comes to eager souls willing to see." Through no fault of his own, the man had been blind from birth. All his life had been spent in physical darkness. All his life he had wanted to have the luxury of seeing light, experiencing color, and being able to be totally independent. Then Jesus came. Certainly he was receptive. Until that time, he had been blind, physically

and spiritually. How blessed we are with eyesight. Yet, how unfortunate we are for not allowing ourselves to see the things of God.

Jesus told the man, "You have now seen him (the Son of man); in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord I believe," and he worshiped him." (vss. 37-38) Faith leads to worship. I wonder when the breakdown begins. When a person trusts Jesus and the miracle of salvation occurs, worship results. What praise and rejoicing takes place! When do the cataracts start growing to make Christians spiritually blind? When does our vision for the Lord become so blurred that we can no longer see clearly the path he has laid out for us to follow? That's what happened to the Pharisees. They were so busy doing their church work and being religious that they could no longer see the reason of their call. They were spiritually blind to the workings of God. "Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, 'What are we blind to?'" (vs. 40) Somehow, I think the spirit of Jesus' reply to their question was more like this: "By George, I think you've got it!"

Lord, help us be free of the spiritual cataracts that blur our vision of you and your plan for our lives. Grant that we may be positive of our identity in you.

Still is minister of music and youth at Woodville Church, Woodville, and pastor of Adams Baptist Mission.

How are you preparing for his return?

By Ruth N. Allen

Matthew 25:1-13

Recently I had occasion to observe our grandchildren absorbed in a television adaptation of Aesop's Fables. One fable happened to be about the ant and the grasshopper. One is familiar with the account of how the ant worked to store up food for the winter while the grasshopper fiddled his time away. When winter came, the ant had food and warmth; but the grasshopper was left out in the cold. This is the version as told in the original fable, but the television version is vastly different. According to the television version the grasshopper is brought in out of the cold with the ants sharing food and warmth with him. Such is the world's version.

Strangely, people today are convinced a similar ending will result in the teaching of Jesus on preparation for his return. Sad to say, those who are unprepared for his return are in for a rude awakening. In the day of his return

UNIFORM

he will say, "The door is shut, and furthermore, I know you not." Consequently, the question, "How are you preparing?" becomes urgent and extremely relevant.

Several truths become evident concerning the passage in Matthew, FIRST, "All must stand before the judgment bar of God." (2 Corinthians 5:10). No one is exempt from God's judgment. Since the first sin in the Garden of Eden, mankind has faced the inevitable consequence of sin and judgment. This fact confronted Jesus as he dealt with people during his ministry. Many were trusting in good works and the law to make them right with God. Others simply dismissed the thought of judgment. Jesus used the parable of the ten virgins to show his authority and his expectation of readiness on their part for his return. The wise and foolish virgins are symbolic of those who are readying and waiting and those who are unprepared to meet judgment. Both groups possessed knowledge of the wedding, knew the bridegroom's identity and anticipated his arrival. Armed with identical information, the

wise group carefully prepared for any delay in arrival; the foolish group made no attempt. When the bridegroom's arrival was delayed, the foolish group, being unprepared, missed the big event while trying to get ready.

SECOND, the wise maidens could slumber peacefully because they were secure in the knowledge of their preparedness. For example, an old farmer plowed his field was approached by a friend who asked, "What would you do if you knew the Lord would return at sundown?" He answered, "I'd continue plowing my field." Happy is the individual who is secure and content, because preparing for eternity is preparing to live this life. Possessing this assurance allays all fears.

THIRD, "My Spirit will not always strive with man," says the Lord (Genesis 6:3). Jesus reminds all people a time will come when opportunity has passed by never to return. "The bridegroom will say, 'The door is shut, and furthermore, I know you not'" (vs. 12.) The finality of these words indicates all hope is gone, and it is too late to enter. A sign during the Middle Ages in a prison read, "Abandon all hope, all ye who enter here." This admonition still speaks

to the unprepared for there comes a time when it is too late to call on the name of the Lord.

FOURTH, on several occasions Jesus spoke of his return and uncertainty of time. Some of his last words spoken just prior to his ascension revealed only God knew the day and hour of his return (Acts 1:7). Much of the New Testament pursues the same theme. All are constantly reminded to be ready for his return.

FIFTH, if one is unprepared for his coming, he can begin now to make ready by trusting Jesus. It's never too late to respond. The purpose in his first advent was to give life eternal to all who would believe, and he will return to usher in his glorious kingdom where all who are prepared will reign forever with him.

Failure to be prepared for his return can easily occur. Years ago during the Alaska gold rush two men were so intent on mining gold they failed to realize the fast approach of winter. When winter did arrive, severe conditions stranded them. The men perished due to a lack of supplies and preparation for a long, hard winter. Are you prepared?

Allen of Jackson, is the wife of Judd Allen, pastor of Ogden Church, Bentonla.

God's compassion for the lost should be ours also

By Jerry Vardaman

Luke 15:1-32

Some of the best things ever said about Jesus were said in criticism of him. His enemies criticized him for healing on the Sabbath. They

criticized him for allowing his disciples to rub out grain on the Sabbath. Here they criticize him for mingling with sinners and publicans. In each of these actions, Jesus was to be praised, not condemned. How would any of us ever be aided, if Jesus refused to be compassionate toward us, and turned us away (Luke 15:1-2)?

Shepherds still build the same kinds of enclosures for sheep as were built in Jesus' time. The parable in Luke 15:3-7 tells of a shepherd who lost one of his hundred sheep — and every one is important. The shepherd left his flock within the safety of a rock enclosure (easily enclosed with small sticks or stones heaped at the entrance). The intensity of his concern was shown in his search — he tried everything he could to recover his lost sheep! God likewise uses every approach to recover the lost sinner. God has a high and holy desire that not one of his sheep be forever lost.

BIBLE BOOK

God is more concerned to recover lost sinners than we might be to recover lost money. Luke tells us in the parable of the lost coin (vss. 8-10) that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. He is not describing the angels themselves, but the heart of God! In Jesus' day, the Jews used "round about" expressions to describe God — fearing that if they referred to him directly, they might break the commandment which warns against taking his name in vain. "In the presence of the angels" is such an expression. Due to his great compassion, God rejoices when sinners repent.

If we would be anxious to recover lost property or money, how much more anxious should we be to recover lost children? God values his children in the same way. His highest priority is on his children; he does not desire a single one of them to be lost.

The prodigal (meaning "wasteful") son went beyond the Jordan River likely — into the region of the Decapolis cities where Greeks lived who would eat pork, contrary to Jewish custom. When the prodigal spent his money, he lost his "friends." The boy seems to have wasted

his funds by consorting with harlots as well (vs. 30).

This young man reminds us of many youths like him on the streets today, who think they can beat the system. This kind of lifestyle represents a failure, even if such a life does succeed where worldly goods are concerned.

This young man did not find anyone in the outside world as loving, compassionate, or kind as his father. He was brought to the most abject kind of poverty — not having anything to eat. The "pods" which he wanted to eat and which he fed to the swine are known today as carob pods. Perhaps the nearest equivalent we have in America would be to eat beans or rice. He was barely subsisting.

Some people never have experienced real life. They barely exist from one meal to another of this type. Some have never learned of the joy of fellowship with our heavenly Father. Though they might have the same kind of food that we dine upon, the joy of the Father's fellowship is what makes the difference.

When the Scripture says that the father of this prodigal gave to him a ring, one should note that in the Greek it means a "seal-ring." The son, having been restored to his father's fellowship, now had something close to our credit card — a ring which authorized purchases. Money, of

course, is the least of the blessings which come in true fellowship and joy which overflows in the love and service of our heavenly Father. Unfortunately, far too many of us have the attitude of the elder brother (15:25-32). Do we really care if others enter into the joy of the Lord or not?

One of the largest Baptist churches in Kansas had an active bus ministry — until some of the members of the church complained that such people as were brought to the church through this ministry were not contributing to the same degree as the other members. This case is exactly why such a ministry was needed in the first place.

Church members need to have the Spirit of the Father, not that of the elder brother. We need to look again at the opening part of this chapter to see the compassionate joy in the father's heart when his property, his resources, and his children are recovered! How many of the multitudes of homeless people are potentially just like this prodigal, needing reconciliation with their earthly parents and their heavenly Father. When compassion can spell the difference, may Christians today be equipped with a full supply, so as to be instruments of reconciliation in the good purposes of God.

Vardaman is professor of archaeology, Miss. State University.

capsules

'DOMESTIC PARTNERS' — MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — The city of Minneapolis has moved one step closer to adopting a resolution which would give gay couples or "domestic partners" the same health care benefits it currently offers to heterosexual married couples. The domestic partnership ordinance, according to its wording, would redefine the family to allow "partners" (unmarried homosexual and heterosexual couples in committed relationships) to receive health care benefits, as well as sick and bereavement leave, if at least one of the partners is employed by the city of Minneapolis.

\$500,000 PLEDGE: WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (ABP) — Plans for a divinity school at Wake Forest University have been boosted by a \$500,000 pledge, the largest gift to date. Clifton L. Benson Jr. of Raleigh, N.C., a trustee of the Baptist school, announced the gift in mid-November.

Wake Forest's board of trustees approved the establishment of a divinity school in April 1989, contingent on sufficient financial support. Benson's gift brings the fund-raising effort to about \$1.6 million. Bob Spinks, director of divinity development, told Associated Baptist Press that trustees had said the school needed either a \$15 million endowment or sufficient cash flow to assure \$1 million a year before the divinity school could be established. Spinks said plans are being made to launch the divinity school in the fall of 1992. The proposed school will cost an estimated \$600,000 to start and \$1 million a year to operate.

7,000 DECISIONS: OKINAWA, Japan (EP) — More than 7,000 people in Okinawa and Osaka made decisions for Jesus Christ during evangelist Luis Palau's first campaign in Japan, which concluded Oct. 1. In all, about 60,000 people heard Palau's gospel messages. The Osaka campaign, in Japan's second largest city, was the first major evangelistic campaign there since a Billy Graham crusade 10 years ago. More than 800 churches throughout the Osaka region participated in the campaign. "Churches that have participated in this crusade have learned that a united evangelistic effort still works and is very important," said Nobumasa Mitsuhashi, a Japanese Baptist pastor. In the oriental country, less than two percent of Japan's population is Christian.

BARNAUL, Siberia (EP) — CONCERT-GOERS IN SOVIET ASIA were amazed when members of the Christian heavy metal band "No Longer Music" threw Bibles into the crowd and talked about faith in Christ. After the concert, about 60 people climbed onto the stage to pray to receive Christ after lead singer David Pierce, who heads the band from Youth With A Mission's youth ministry in Amsterdam, Holland, preached about the saving work of Jesus and then invited concert-goers to respond in prayer. "No Longer Music," the top-of-the-bill band in a performance in the first-ever international music festival that included 19 other groups from China, Japan, and across the U.S.S.R., was the only Western band invited to take part in the four-day Rock Asia festival in Barnaul, Siberia.

FIRST WOMAN CHAPLAIN IN ROYAL NAVY — LEICESTER, ENGLAND (BT/ebps) — Caroline Anne Pullman, who has served the Clarendon Park Baptist Church here since 1985, has become the first female chaplain in the Royal Navy. Pullman has taken up her appointment at HMS Daedalus at Lee-on-Solent, Hants, the Royal Navy's Air Engineering school and the home of the Fleet Air Arm. She is one of 16 free church chaplains who serves in the Royal Navy.

WOMAN EVANGELISM SECRETARY — SANTA SEVERA, ITALY (ebps) — Italian Baptists may be the first Baptist union to elect a woman to head their Department of Evangelism. Adriana Pagnotta Cavina received the majority of votes cast during the Thirty-First General Assembly of the Italian Baptist Union, Oct. 29-31, 1990. Delegates elected her predecessor, Saverio Guarna, president of the Union, succeeding in that office Paolo Spanu. "The election of a woman in our Union is not unusual," said Spanu. "Five of our pastors are women."

CONCERNED WOMEN WIN — BANGOR, Maine (EP) — The Rockland, Maine school district violated the U.S. Constitution when it refused to allow a church to rent a high school cafeteria for an evangelistic Christmas banquet, a federal judge in Bangor, Maine ruled Nov. 14.

Judge D. Brock Hornsby, in a landmark ruling for the state of Maine, ruled that the Rockland public school had created an open forum by allowing other community groups to use school facilities for meetings. The court ruled that the school's prohibition on religious use of the facilities was a content-based restriction on speech which violated the free speech clause of the First Amendment.

LAS CASAS Guatemala (EP) — A RADIO STATION run by Baptists in a remote, mountainous region of Guatemala is known as the "electronic John the Baptist" because of its regular ministry of carrying personal messages to the inhabitants of the wilderness area.

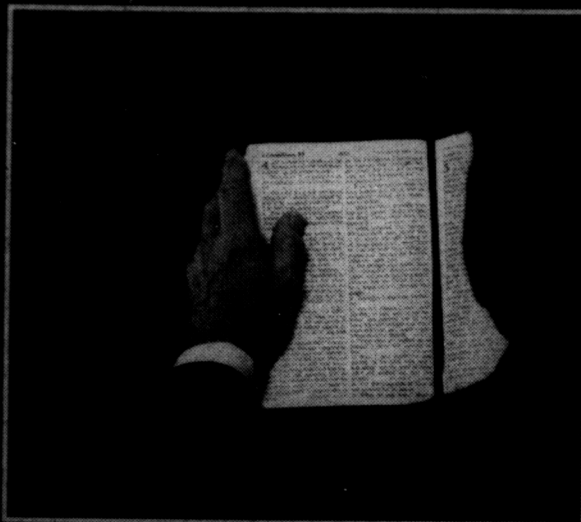
THE ARMED FORCES RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICE will carry The Baptist Hour over its radio network for 13 weeks starting in the spring of 1991. Through AFRTS, the program will be heard by more than a million military and civilian members of the Department of Defense stationed overseas and their families as well as by department personnel aboard ships at sea, including those in the Persian Gulf. The program will not be heard in Saudi Arabia, however. "Out of consideration for the request of our Saudi hosts, we do not have any religious programming there," said Chaplain, Major, Richard Davenport, U.S.A.F., the religious programming coordinator for AFRTS.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM giving is up in the Southern Baptist Convention for 1990. Nineteen states showed an increase, while 16 showed a decrease in giving. Dollar-wise the increase was \$954,034 or 8.6 percent over the previous year. In designated giving 17 states had a decrease and 20 had an increase. There was an 8.9 percent increase (\$176,765) in designated gifts over the previous year.

RICHMOND, VA. — The FMB is releasing the first Spanish-language edition of "Foreign Missions Update," its monthly video news and feature program, in December. The next Spanish edition is scheduled for release in April 1991, followed by one every six months.

GIVE . . .

Live God's Word



Make Your Will Month

January is "Make Your Will Month."

Pastor's ministry takes him to flea market, radio station

By Sarah Zimmerman

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (BP) — Being a Southern Baptist pastor in South Dakota means Jesse Moore has a table at a flea market, works at an auction, and plays Christian music.

The Oklahoma native can't assume that simply being Southern Baptist will open doors in Sioux Falls, a city that is 70 percent Lutheran and 23 percent Catholic.

"People are probably never going to knock on my door," says the pastor of Ridgecrest Church, one of only three Southern Baptist churches in the ci-

ty of 100,000.

The first step for Moore, his wife and their two children was moving to the lower middle class community near the church. "If you can't live with the people you're serving, how in the world do you think they'll come to you with their problems?" Moore asks.

Next, Moore scheduled a meeting with the parish priest. He decided the priest, who had served there for years, could tell him more about the neighborhood than anyone else.

Every Saturday morning, Moore

can be heard hosting a two-hour program for the local Christian radio station. Moore and his partner play Christian rock music, which is welcomed by the city's younger listeners.

Moore also can be found selling goods at the flea market, working during an auction, or practicing with the church's band. The band plays Christian music once a month during the Sunday evening worship service. Moore uses the opportunity to present the gospel quickly and plainly to the 100 people gathered for the music.

With an average Sunday morning worship attendance of 70 — up from 25 the first Sunday Moore preached — Ridgecrest Church also ministers in more traditional ways. It serves hot meals to people in need twice a month and operates a food pantry and clothing closet.

Zimmerman writes for HMB.

Brotherhood employee Lott enters fourth retirement

MEMPHIS — At year's end, Time magazine makes headlines with its "Man of the Year." The Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission can do the national weekly magazine one better with a "Man of the Century."

Otis Lott, the Commission's 89-year-old accounts receivable clerk, retired Dec. 6, from what he calls

"22 years of part-time retirement." Since 1968, he has handled Brotherhood's accounts with Baptist Book Stores and state Brotherhood departments.

The Brotherhood Commission stint represented the last of "four entirely different careers" for Lott.

Born in Laurel, Miss., on Oct. 18, 1901, Lott worked for Dunn and Bradstreet, the national credit reporting agency, in their Memphis office in 1918. He stayed until 1922 when he entered Mississippi A & M (now Mississippi State University) for two years. His roommate was John Cornelius Stennis, a cheerleader who

became a U.S. senator.

He left college and entered the working world for good in 1924, returning to Dunn and Bradstreet for 22 years. He was a reporter and service manager in Huntington, W. Va., Memphis, Cleveland, Toledo, and Chicago.

In the years to follow, the Great Depression, World War II (he was too young for the first one), and the advent of the supermarket "couldn't put Otis H. Lott out of a job," he said.

He met his wife, the former Hettie Williams of Greenwood, Miss., while traveling in the Mississippi Delta for Dunn and Bradstreet. They married in 1930 and celebrated their 60th anniversary last June 1. They have two sons and five grandchildren.

Another career began in the 1940s as Lott spent 10 years managing a grocery store in Memphis at the intersection of Overton Park Ave.

By 1954, Lott left the grocery business and started work — primarily in inventory management — with the Department of Defense. That job took him from Memphis to Detroit and Columbus, Ohio.

A desire to be closer to children and grandchildren brought the Lotts back to Memphis, and at last to the Brotherhood Commission.



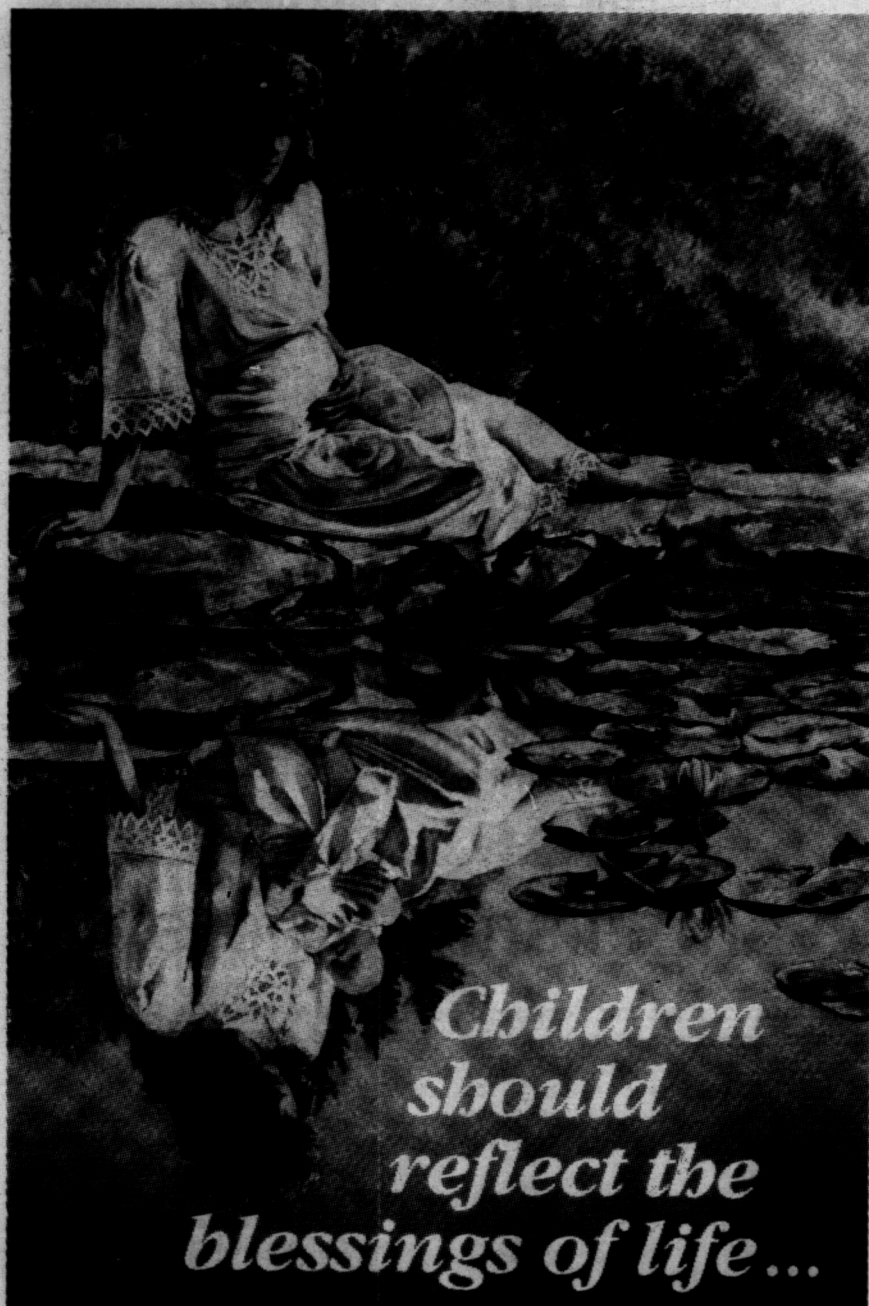
Lott

Baptist Record

005-DTM
SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
901 COMMERCE ST SUITE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203

Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

January 10, 1991



*Children
should
reflect the
blessings of life...*

Note: Look at the above picture turned upside down. "To protect 'the least of these' gifts from God, our brethren, with everything that God has placed at our disposal is not merely facultative, but exigent," states C. Roy McMillan, executive, Christian Action Group, Jackson. "Additionally, it is among the greatest and most satisfying of our sundry stewardships." Many churches across the United States plan to observe Jan. 20 as Sanctity of Human Life Sunday.

Compere's dramas provide funds for Michigan church

W. Lowrey Compere, president emeritus, Clarke College, and his wife, Jacqueline, during 1990 adopted as a mission project the Fellowship Baptist Church, Saline, Mich., near Detroit. Their goal was to help pay the \$17,000 the church owed on its building lot. They did that, and more.

In July, 1988, John Boggan and his wife, Ann, had gone from a pastorate in Newton County to serve this little four-year-old church that had been without a pastor for 14 months, and where attendance had dwindled to seven or eight.

Compere, who does dramatic presentations from the Scripture, knows by memory the entire book of Mark, plus many other scriptural selections. Last year was the third time that he let the income from the presentations go to missions.

At Gulfshore, for a senior adult retreat, he portrayed King David, Paul, Simon Peter, and Jesus. He also appeared in associational rallies and in 30 church engagements in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama. Jacqueline usually introduced the presentations and also gave a program of readings in many senior adult luncheons.

"We don't consider ourselves money raisers," said Compere. "We give people an opportunity to share in an exciting home missions project, and they respond." A Christian businessman matched all the funds given.

The \$17,000 debt was paid off in April. The land was dedicated on May 27 and construction began the next week. Then \$10,000 more in offerings were sent by the Compere's to help on the building cost.

Four construction teams went to Saline from Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee; the church borrowed \$100,000 to finish paying for materials. On Nov. 11, the people began worship in a new building.

On a recent Sunday the church had a record Sunday School attendance of 54, a morning worship attendance of 75, and 48 in evening service. They have had 16 additions since moving into the building, and 100 were present for a special Christmas service.

"It's still true — it's no secret what God can do," said Compere. "He has worked many miracles in Saline, and we have known deep satisfaction in being used by him as 'fellow partners in the privilege.'"

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, January 17, 1991

Published Since 1877

Baptist workers in Mideast; some staying, some leaving

By Mike Creswell

BRUSSELS, Belgium (BP) — Most Southern Baptist workers in the Middle East were still at their posts Jan. 9, but they were keeping suitcases packed and some were preparing to leave as the Jan. 15 United Nations deadline for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait neared.

Many Southern Baptist representatives in the region would find it difficult to leave even if they wanted to, since planes out of some strategic areas are booked solid for weeks. Only two airlines serve Jordan now, and they are booked up until after Jan. 15, a representative there said.

Jordan is perilously wedged between Iraq and Israel. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein has vowed to attack Israel if Iraq is attacked by the United States and other forces in Saudi Arabia.

"People here are pretty stressed out," said Southern Baptist worker Arylis Milligan in Amman, Jordan. "Everyone is at his limit, simply because of the constant tension of not knowing what's going to happen."

The workers have secured entry visas for Syria as a last-ditch evacuation outlet, Milligan said, and have stockpiled food and water. Families have been advised to stay indoors for at least four or five days if war breaks out to allow security forces time to regain control, she said.

Little anti-American sentiment has been expressed in Jordan so far, and

articles in a local English-language newspaper assured foreigners they would continue to be protected. "We personally have had no threats," said Milligan, of Tulsa, Okla.

Baptist personnel in the West Bank and Gaza have faced a much tenser situation as Palestinians supporting Iraq have stepped up their fight — called the Intifada — against Israeli occupation. Violent clashes and random attacks have increased in recent weeks, leading Southern Baptist workers assigned there to stay mostly indoors.

The 21 Southern Baptist personnel in Gaza are assigned to work with a nursing school that now has 14 nursing students. After graduating a class of 26 students, in September, a shortage of teachers kept the school from having any more students, said Southern Baptist teacher Karl Weathers.

Scrawled on the side of the hospital, part of the compound where the workers live, are the Arabic words "Death to America." Weathers and his wife, Thelma, both of Earle, Ark., can see the sign from their front porch.

"That means your government, not you personally," one student told Mrs. Weathers. But she and others worry about whether many of the young Palestinians could confuse "America" with Americans.

In one incident, a man spat at a Baptist representative's feet and yell-

ed, "Death to foreigners!" But the workers have been assured by Palestinians that they are considered friends and will be safe.

The Southern Baptist workers are virtually the only Westerners left in Gaza. Most others have left the area. The workers say their suitcases are packed for an overland departure if war breaks out. In Gaza, rioting by war-crazed mobs may be a bigger threat than Iraqi missiles, one worker said.

On the West Bank, also the scene of frequent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops in recent weeks, Baptist workers have been threatened and had a vehicle vandalized.

In Israel itself, preparations include stockpiling food and water and keeping gas masks and tape for sealing off rooms close at hand in case of an Iraqi poison gas attack, said Martha Hocutt in Ra'anana. The governments of Sweden and Germany have ordered their citizens out of the country, and the U.S. government has warned its citizens of the dangers of remaining.

"The tension and the anxiety are such that you can cut it with a knife, yet people are going on with routine responsibilities. You try to go on and function anyway," said representative Norm Lytle of Gadsden, Ala.

In Israel, as in other countries, the choice to go or stay is up to the individual or family involved.

Thorne learned Jan. 9 that several Baptist workers and families will leave Israel by boat Jan. 13 from Haifa.

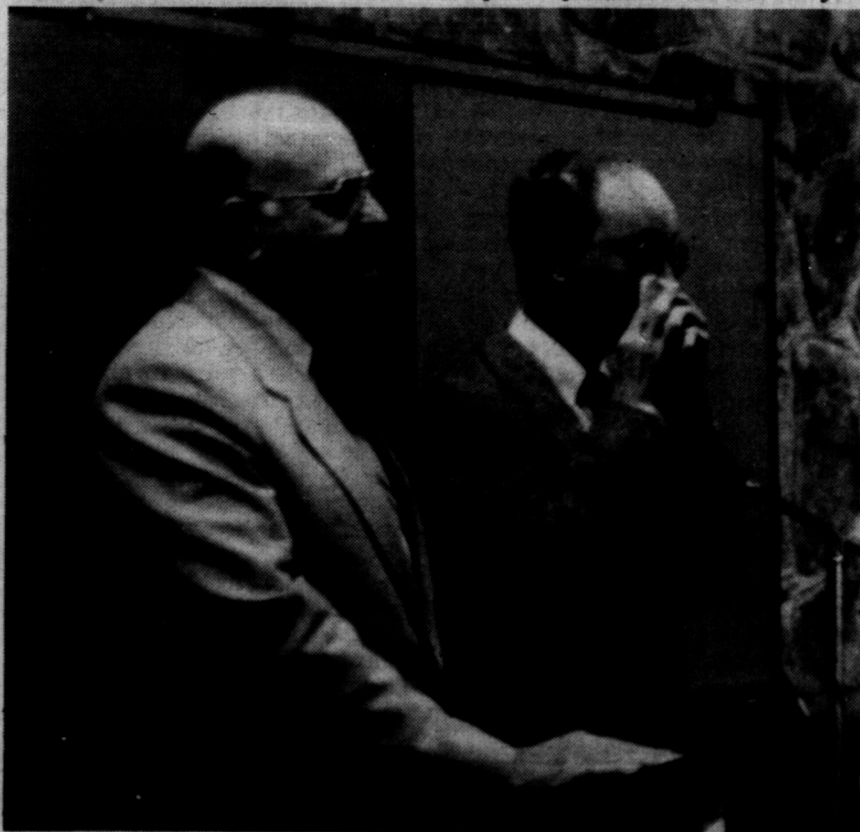
In Bahrain, on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia, Baptist worker Margaret McPherson of Midland, Texas, was planning to return to the United States as soon as a flight could be arranged. Worker Peggy Littlejohn, of Houston, and her two children returned to their U.S. home earlier. For now her husband, Don Littlejohn of Fort Worth, Texas, will remain in Bahrain.

In Egypt, Southern Baptist representative Mike Edens of Guthrie, Okla., said a very conservative mood exists among Muslims, but he has seen no big outpouring of anti-American sentiment. His main extra duty has been making preparations for Southern Baptist personnel who might have to evacuate.

In Yemen, work continues at the hospital at Ibb. It is staffed by 27 Southern Baptist representatives who intend to remain at their work, although about 90 percent of Westerners have left Yemen, said pharmacist Hugh Provost of West Memphis, Ark.

"We all have exit visas and always have stuff ready for a quick exit, but you can't just go off and leave a hospital. You can't leave sick people."

Creswell, Baptist Press correspondent for Europe and the Middle East, is based in Brussels.



Tearful Appearance — Southern Baptist foreign missionary Maurice Graham, right, made his first public appearance since his release as a hostage in the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait to the Woman's Missionary Union executive board. Tears were shed by both Graham and the women as they met each other face-to-face. Keith Parks, left, president of the Foreign Mission Board, told the group it was appropriate that they should be the first to hear Graham since WMU women had prayed so diligently for his release. (WMU photo)

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Acquainted with grief

"Wherefore, comfort one another."

Has the church been so busy here and there that we missed this admonition? We mutter a few words, pat the person's hand, and depart from the valley of tears.

A pastor asked a widow of six months, "Are we being church to you?"

She was explaining to me all that had been done by this loving fellowship. "Most of all, they were there. Nothing beats the presence of a person. On Sunday morning in worship I felt surrounded by a curtain of caring people who became such a well of comfort. I've drawn from it so often. Not only words, but deeds! One fixed a dragging door, another put up a fence. Even the teenagers were involved. Others invited me out, I'm offered rides 'most everywhere. I love that church."

She continued, "Don't say, 'I know how you feel,' or 'He is better off.' He may be but I'm not. Don't say, 'God needed him.' Your faith does not ease the pain. Your faith does not make things right. Your faith will give strength and help you endure it. God made us to grieve, so give in to it. Don't feel guilty about it, and don't put a judgment on your feelings. Emotion and rationality have little in common. Acknowledge your feelings and quit

trying to pretend. Don't be afraid to talk about it."

Since talking with her, I've pondered the words. We are told that seven out of 10 people are hurting on any given day. Whole families are affected and at least half of them need someone to minister to them.

Isaiah 53:3 tells us that Christ is "acquainted with grief." Live long enough and you will experience grief. Waves of sorrow will wash over you and the undertow will dog you for a long time. My 6-year-old brother was killed when hit by an automobile. Sixty years later, I heard my mother say, "I still miss him." The undertow was still there.

Grief is an open wound resulting from a great loss. Grief is sorrow over what may never be again. It's the silent, knife-like terror that strikes and things are not as before and never will be.

Death, divorce, stressful relationships, job loss — whatever brings loss has the baggage of grief when it invades your home. It may be prepared to stay a long time. The earthquake of death rattles the heart and the aftershocks continue.

Three avenues open: withdrawal, defense, or facing up to it. Some withdraw from friends and church.

Others grow defensive and lash out, "Why me?" Some will face up to it, doing what is necessary to return to emotional peace.

The resource of friends is vital. Even new converts remain loyal to a certain church in proportion to the number of friends. The fellowship of believers has the ability and hopefully the compassion to get the grief-stricken back on track. David said, "He restores my soul."

Duke McCall, former president of Southern Seminary, in an article about his wife's death, wrote, "Alone after half a century of being part of a divinely provided partnership, nothing in the world seems familiar any more. It would be easier to start over on a new planet."

"Returning home from foreign travel for the first time after Marguerite's death, the prospect of entering an empty apartment threw me into deep depression. I was embarrassed that after more than three months I could not handle my grief."

McCall recalled an article on death: "In fact, you never really get over the death of someone you love; you just learn to live with it."

In our churches, who are the people who help others to "learn to live with it"?

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

"There is a spirit of man"

By Richard D. Land
(Job 32:8)

The Bible persistently emphasizes the uniqueness of human beings in God's created order. This special God-given quality gives human life its sacredness.

Human life derives its sacredness from its divine origin and nature, both of which are alluded to in the statement, "there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). The Bible then adds, "The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

Both the language and the subject of these passages harken back to the creation account. The "spirit in man" of Job 32:8 is the ruach used for the "spirit of God" in Job 33:4 and in Genesis 1:2. Humans are created "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27, RSV). Genesis 2:7 says "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

While Genesis clearly identifies human beings as part of the created order, the emphasis is on a uniqueness which is derived from being made in God's image. That divine image, which made relationship with God possible, was marred but not obliterated by man's fall. God com-

municated with Adam and Eve both before (Gen. 1:28) and after (Gen. 3:9 ff.) man's fall.

Psalm 8 juxtaposes man's limitations with his privileges and responsibilities, even as fallen creatures in a fallen world. Human beings, created "a little lower than the heavenly beings" are still "crowned with glory and honor" (8:5 NIV) and given "dominion" over the rest of creation.

Even after the fall, "the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8, "understanding" being the Hebrew, binah, meaning "discernment or wisdom"). Consequently, God tells fallen but regenerate humanity, "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding" (Ps. 32:9), but instead that he would "instruct . . . and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go" (Ps. 32:8).

The truth that emerges from these passages is that human life is sacred, thus distinct from all other created life. We are different in nature and design from all other life. The differences are of kind, not degree. We are not merely the most advanced life in the animal kingdom.

Our world needs this truth desperately. Human life, from conception to death and at all points in

between, is under violent assault.

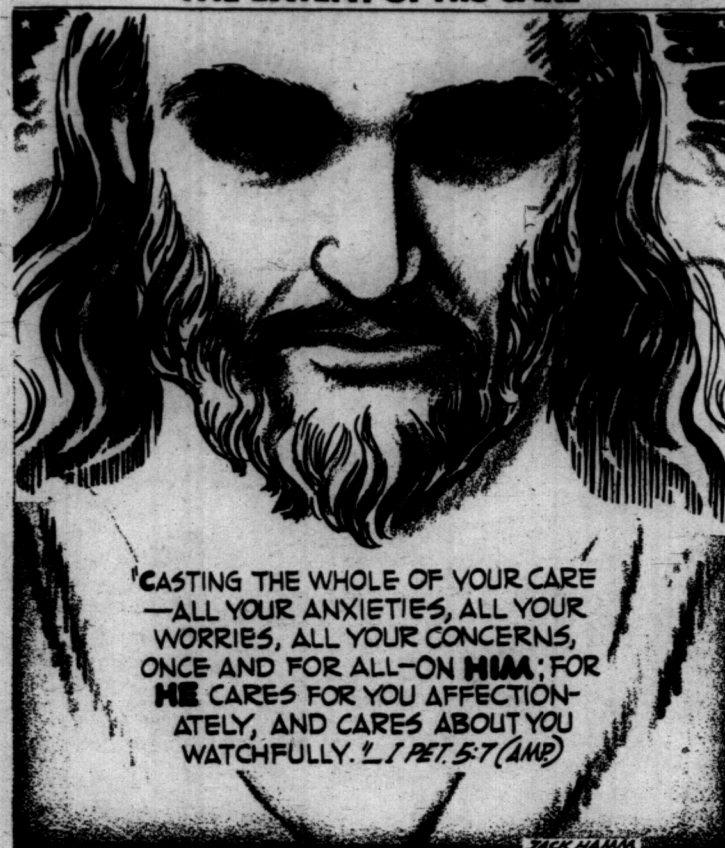
The Nazi death camps 50 years ago and the more recent Cambodian genocide illustrate what an alarmingly dangerous place the world is for those two young, too few, too old, too weak, too handicapped or too ill to defend their right to life when the sanctity of any human life is denied or disregarded.

Christians must sound the clarion call against all attitudes and actions which assault the sacredness of human life. We must bear witness by deed as well as by word that human life is sacred. It is a precious, irreplaceable gift from God. We must oppose the barbaric, lethal combination of technical expertise and spiritual ignorance which would deny that "there is a spirit in man" and abort and experiment on our preborn, harvest fetal tissue, allow death into the nursery for our mentally and physically handicapped infants and encourage euthanasia in our hospitals and retirement homes.

Let us, as brothers and sisters in Christ, covenant together this Sanctity of Human Life Sunday to pray for the discernment and the diligence to do this and more.

Land is the executive director, Christian Life Commission, SBC.

THE EXTENT OF HIS CARE



"CASTING THE WHOLE OF YOUR CARE — ALL YOUR ANXIETIES, ALL YOUR WORRIES, ALL YOUR CONCERNS, ONCE AND FOR ALL — ON HIM; FOR HE CARES FOR YOU AFFECTIONATELY, AND CARES ABOUT YOU WATCHFULLY. LUKE 11:28 (AMP)"

Evangelism Conference

The state Evangelism Conference will meet in the new worship center of First Church, Clinton, Jan. 28-30. This is a real opportunity for Mississippi Baptists to receive motivation and inspiration for evangelism.

Baptisms increased this past year and we thank God for concerned pastors and laypersons who faithfully share the gospel.

J. Garland McKee will be presented

as the new evangelism director. Churches need to make sure they provide for the pastor and layworkers to attend this vital meeting.

Life-style Witnessing Conference for women will be conducted Tuesday afternoon, 1:45-3:45 at First Church, Clinton. Esther Burroughs of the Home Mission Board will lead this meeting. Church leaders in Sunday School, WMU, and pastors' wives are invited to attend.

Diary of an unborn child

October 5 — Today my life began. My parents do not know it yet, I am as small as a seed of an apple, but it is I already. And I am to be a girl. I shall have blond hair and blue eyes. Just about everything is settled though, even the fact that I shall love flowers.

October 19 — Some say that I am not a real person yet, that only my mother exists. But I am a real person, just as a small crumb of bread is yet truly bread. My mother is. And I am.

October 23 — My mouth is just beginning to open now. Just think, in a year or so I shall be laughing and later talking. I know what my first word will be: MAMA.

October 25 — My heart began to beat today all by itself. From now on it shall gently beat for the rest of my life without ever stopping to rest! And after many years it will tire. It will stop, and then I shall die.

November 2 — I am growing a bit every day. My arms and legs are beginning to take shape. But I have to wait a long time yet before those little legs will raise me to my mother's arms, before these little arms will be able to gather flowers and embrace my father.

November 12 — Tiny fingers are beginning to form on my hands. Funny how small they are! I'll be able to stroke my mother's hair with them.

November 20 — It wasn't until today that the doctor told mom that I am living here under her heart. Oh, how happy she must be! Are you happy, mom?

November 25 — My mom and dad are probably thinking about a name for me. But they don't even know that I am a little girl. I want to be called Kathy. I am getting so big already.

December 10 — My hair is growing. It is smooth and bright and shiny. I wonder what kind of hair mom has.

December 13 — I am just about able to see. It is dark around me. When mom brings me into the world it will be full of sunshine and flowers. But what I want more than anything is to see my mom. How do you look, Mom?

December 24 — I wonder if mom hears the whispering of my heart? Some children come into the world a little sick. But my heart is strong and healthy. It beats so evenly: tup-tup, tup-tup. You'll have a healthy little daughter, Mom!

December 28 — Today my mother killed me. — Right to Life

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